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# INDIA TODAY

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BY RISKING THEIR LIVELIHOODS, AND LIVES, TO FIGHT CORRUPTION

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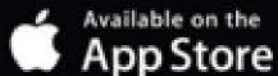
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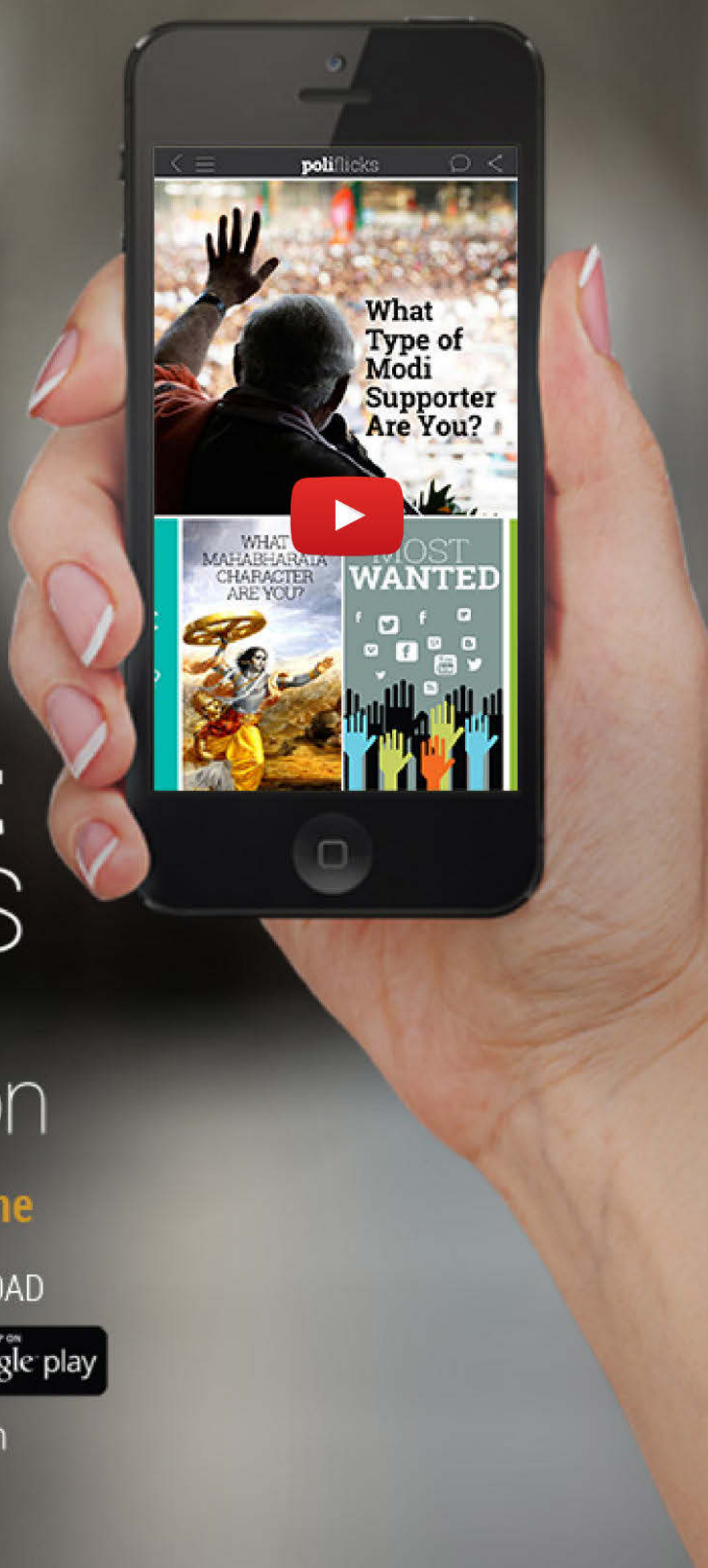
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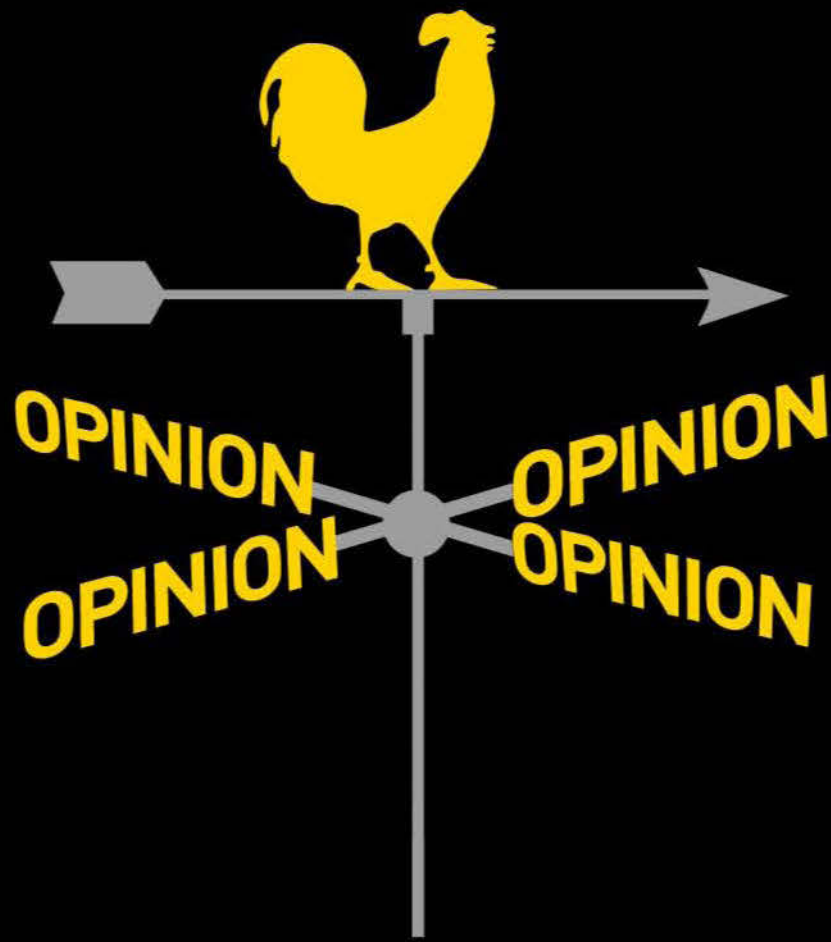
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## FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Corruption in India never ceases to amaze me. We routinely read about civil servants in minor postings amassing huge fortunes through their devilish ingenuity to somehow extract money from every nook and cranny. In the years before liberalisation, this was possible because of the shortage of basic civic amenities such as gas, phone and electricity connections. Back then, nepotism, influence and bribery were the most efficient ways to bypass the queue. Today, when basic facilities are easily available, bureaucrats have created Byzantine rules and countless procedures that allow them to squeeze the common citizen. On a bigger scale, quiet land-use changes, which can affect the value of property by hundreds of crores with a stroke of the pen, and dubious tendering processes that led to the coal scam and the 2G scam during the previous UPA regime, are examples of the opaqueness that allows officials to exploit the system.

It's true that several measures have been taken to create an environment of transparency. The Right to Information Act, 2005, has played a big role by allowing common citizens to inquire about government spending and filing cases against their elected representatives. Our courts have supported this move, and often upheld such petitions by ordering CBI probes and passing judgments against influential politicians and bureaucrats. A vibrant media, too, has been vigilant to corruption, and has been willing to go the extra mile to expose wrongdoing. The Anna Hazare-led Lokayukta movement in 2011 was built solely on an anti-corruption plank and eventually led to Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party storming into power in Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Lok Sabha campaign in 2014 made corruption an important election issue, raising UPA's scams and promising to bring back black money hoarded in overseas tax havens. This is all very well but the malaise of corruption is so deeply ingrained in our culture and our system that it is an extraordinary task to eliminate it. Fortunately, so far the Modi government seems to have flushed out corruption at the top, which was an established practice of previous governments. Paradoxically, when the government makes a noise about attacking corruption, the price for illicit "services" only goes up.

However, when there are a few good men and women in the right place, there is hope. Luckily, such individuals exist, and are trying desperately to fight this curse. Armed with RTI replies, court petitions and an unbending conscience, these whistle-blowers are putting their jobs, their safety and even their lives on the line to campaign against corruption at various levels. They may be a blind village sarpanch in Gujarat, a top bureaucrat in Haryana, a retired Army officer in Mumbai, or a medical officer in Bhopal. Although their causes may vary—from illegal mining to transport scams, from the disproportionate wealth of politicians to education scandals—the larger goal is the same. To rid India from the yoke of corruption and to herald a culture where the smallest facilities are dispensed and the biggest deals are struck without fear or favour. These people are more than just crusaders or agitators. We have chosen to call them the "new freedom fighters".

Our cover story, written by Deputy Editor Kunal Pradhan with inputs from our correspondents across India, celebrates some of these whistle-blowers by documenting their struggles. They stand out because their minor rebellions reveal a bigger truth. They prove that the system can be cleansed using legitimate means if a person is determined to go the extra mile.

To beat corruption, more of us need to stand up against it. As people who are willing to risk everything to combat this malaise, the whistle-blowers are shining examples. Each bribe given, each "connection" made, adds to the over-arching narrative of corruption in India. It's time to say, "No". Remember, the best way to effect change is to help create it.

  
 (Aroon Purie)



OUR JULY  
2010 COVER



COVER STORY  
**WHISTLE-BLOWERS**

**10** | New Freedom Fighters

Brave whistle-blowers from across the country are putting their jobs and personal safety on the line to fight the system and save India from the yoke of corruption.



**SMART MONEY**

**33** | Your Personal Guide to Growth

- Gold Scheme • Market Volatility
- Home Loans • Health Insurance
- Digital Will

**AUTO SPECIAL**  
**HOT WHEELS**

**39** | Geared for the Future

A clutch of new cars across segments, fine-tuned and loaded with features, are coming to Indian roads with the promise of good value for money.



**THE BIG STORY**  
**DMAT SCAM**

**20** | A Bimaru State of Admissions

The scandal in admissions to Madhya Pradesh's private medical colleges is turning out to be bigger than Vyapam.

**NEIGHBOURS**  
**NEPAL**

**30** | Nepal's Himalayan Leap

The Himalayan nation's new Constitution sparks off discontent within and a flashpoint with India.



**ASSEMBLY POLLS**  
**BIHAR**

**24** | Paswans Write a New Chapter

As Paswan gets set to pass the baton to son Chirag, Bihar's Dalit politics may be changing course: from identity to aspirational.

- 5 UPFRONT
- 7 GLASS HOUSE
- 58 GLOSSARY
- 60 EYECATCHERS

Cover Photograph by **ROHIT CHAWLA**

# Inside Jihad Central

SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

Why a resurgent Lashkar-e-Taiba poses a new danger to India



“Pakistan is known to provide shelter to some of the most-wanted criminals. It must be shunned and shamed on all international platforms.”

A. SRIKANTIAH, *Bengaluru*

## Put Pressure on Pakistan

The story reveals Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed's sinister plot of using religion as a tool to incite vulnerable youths from poor and middle-class families to wage war against India (Inside Jihad Central, September 21). India must double its efforts internationally and, if need be, involve the Gulf Cooperation Council, to make Pakistan bring the terrorists to book and eliminate camps of all terror outfits.

B. RAJASEKARAN, *Bengaluru*

The terror attacks in Gurdaspur and Udhampur, sponsored by the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), are painful reminders of the unholy alliance between the state and non-state actors in Pakistan. Sadly, India has no assurance, whatsoever, from Pakistan that it will keep the LeT in check. Rather the latter has given a free rein to JuD supremo Hafiz Saeed, while 26/11 attack mastermind



## Involve Pak Army in Talks

The article on India-Pakistan back channel talks in the Manmohan-Musharraf era was a particularly

intriguing piece (The Secret Indo-Pak Talks, September 21). It clearly states the importance of including the Pakistani defence establishment in any bilateral dialogue with Pakistan. That Pervez Musharraf had the full support of the then Pakistani army and the ISI played a pivotal role in both the countries drawing close to a breakthrough. For future engagements too, taking the Pakistani army on board will better the chances of arriving at a clinching deal with the neighbour.

RAHUL KAPOOR, *Delhi*

Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi has been allowed to go scot-free. India needs to move beyond dossier diplomacy and instead devise a strategy to embarrass Pakistan on the global stage and force it into taking action against terrorists operating from its soil.

K.R. NARASIMHAN, *Chennai*

It is futile to engage the civilian government in Pakistan on peace talks as no one is sure about who really is in charge of the country. The LeT seems to be an extended division of the military without any accountability, and the government doesn't have the power to question the military. In such a scenario, India would have to rope in the common friends of both the countries and work through backroom diplomacy to contain the LeT.

K.R. NAMBIAR, *Navi Mumbai*

The article confirms India's allegations that the LeT is a proxy of the ISI. As the organisation has the tacit support of the state, the



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THE SECRET  
INDO-PAK TALKS

Instead of getting into a brawling competition, it would be wise to take Manmohan-Musharraf talks further.

**Syed**  
OROP WAR ENDS,  
FUND BATTLE BEGINS

The writer should have gone into the genesis of the issue which forced the

ex-servicemen to start an agitation.

**Nalin**  
MODI'S SMART CITIES  
HAVE A VIABILITY GAP

Going by the story, it definitely seems that M. Venkaiah Naidu is not a smart minister.

**Rajendraprasada Reddy**  
WHO'S THAT GIRL?

Actresses like Richa Chadha and Radhika Apte have maintained a fine balance between commercial and arthouse movies.  
**Kamal**



only way to defang it is by checking the supply of arms to it. For this, India needs to get the US on board and convince it to stop arms supply as well monetary assistance to Pakistan. This will force the state to check its support to LeT.

AKSHAY VISWANATHAN,  
Thiruvananthapuram

## Mixed Views

If one set of government employees gets one rank, one pension, why not others (OROP War Ends, Fund Battle Begins, September 21)? The demand for OROP is intellectually unsustainable. Pension, by definition, can only be based on the last salary drawn and on the length of service. How can a person be paid a pension on an amount that he did not draw?

J.S. ACHARYA, Hyderabad

At last Prime Minister Narendra Modi kept his promise by announcing OROP for all ex-servicemen, including those who retired prematurely. By doing so, he has put a lid on the misleading campaign run by the opposition to defame the government.

K.R. SRINIVASAN, Secunderabad

## Too Many Holes in This Smart Plan

The Smart Cities programme looks promising



## Revisit Food Policies

Agricultural success doesn't mean anything if prices of food grain and pulses continue to rise and a majority of population goes hungry (Politics of Food, September 21). The daily protein consumption has dipped from 60.2g per capita in 1993-94 to 56.5g in 2011-12 in rural areas and from 57.2g to 55.7g in urban areas. Malnutrition is one of the biggest concerns for India—a country that wants to grow rapidly cannot do so with an undernourished young population that is prone to illness.

M.M. GURBAXANI, Bengaluru

Children are the future of a country, but thanks to the faulty policies of the government, an entire generation could be suffering from malnutrition. Eggs are a cheap source of protein, and by excluding it from the diet of poor tribal people, the state is putting the nutrition burden on vegetables which are way beyond their reach. The government must revisit its food policies before it's too late.

KRISHAN KALRA, via email

on paper but I feel rapid urbanisation is eating into open spaces that any modern city must have (Modi's Smart Cities Have a Viability Gap, September 21). The urban town planners must make a provision for open spaces for relaxation and entertainment. A smart city should not be a heartless, concrete jungle.

J. AKSHAY, Bengaluru

We don't know what will constitute a smart city. We don't know who will certify them. We don't yet know how they will be funded. The Prime Minister thinks he has delivered on his promise of building 100 smart cities by launching the mission on June 25, but an ill-drafted plan is as good as a false promise. No wonder then that the government is struggling to get investors on board, with many states showing scepticism about its implementation.

RAMESH SINHA, Gurgaon

## Corrigendum

In the cover story 'Life, Loves and Lies of Indrani', published in the September 14 issue, the Neerja Shah who lives at Marlow Building, Pochkhanwala Road, in Mumbai, does not work with the customs and excise department. The error is regretted.

## Angels of Change

*Life is a suffering, the Buddha said, enunciating the first of his four Noble Truths. In India, it is a reality that troubles us whichever street we live on, wherever we go. One-third of India's populace going to bed hungry every night. Able-bodied men sitting idle, their life ahead as barren as their fields. For millions in the country, the flame of hope is but a flicker.*

*As citizens of this country, there is much that each of us can do to prevent that flame*



**ELIAZAR ROSE (CENTRE) HAS HELPED CREATE AWARENESS ABOUT LEPROSY TREATMENT**

*from being snuffed out. Some people took the path that all of us hesitate to take for want of time or caring.*

*The road to change, as they found out, is strewn with thorns. But their journey has made a remarkable difference to the lives of the people they wanted to help. Most of these helping hands are ordinary people.*

*Philosopher Kahlil Gibran would describe them as "those who have little and give it all". And they give all not because they want recognition—they still live in relative obscurity—but because their concern comes from deep within. They are India's quiet revolutionaries. They are what Gandhi would have called "determined spirits who are fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission".*

**by Raj Chengappa**

January 15, 1996



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# NEPAL'S MISSED TRYST WITH DESTINY

The promulgation of a new constitution in Nepal should be considered a milestone in its political evolution. Nepal has waited for this event since they elected the first Constituent Assembly (CA-I) in April 2008. By then, King Gyanendra had gone. The CA-I declared Nepal as a federal democratic republic with near consensus at its very first meeting, excluding four of its members who staged a walkout. Its unfinished tasks were to be completed by CA-II, which was elected in November 2013.

Rather than taking forward Nepal's quest for inclusive democracy, the three major parties—the Nepali Congress, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), and the United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)—resiled from the social and political compacts that they had earlier contracted. The Janajatis, Dalits, Madhesi and women find themselves disenfranchised. To them, the new constitution appears not as the foundation of a new republic, but a transition from monarchy to oligarchy.

Nepal, meanwhile, is slipping into a long and unnecessary civil strife, with its entire southern belt on fire. Can the growing revolt in the Terai be ignored? If so, only to the detriment of Nepal. Unrest could spread to the mid-hills, as the Janajatis assert their rights. Occupying less than a quarter of its territory, but holding the majority of its population and the hub of its economy, the Terai is Nepal's gateway, not just to India but to the rest of the world. Nepal has no source for its essential supplies, from iodised salt to petroleum products, other than through India.

The interminably fledgling character of Nepal's movement towards democracy is characterised by the impermanence of its constitutions. That of 1948 sanctified the Rana rule. The one of 1951 created a 'king in the council of ministers'. Sir Ivor Jennings—a believer of democracy at home and authoritarianism in the Orient—crafted the 1959 Constitution as a 'royal gift', designating the monarch as the source of the Constitution. Even that was too much for King Mahendra, who promptly dismissed the elected government the following year and instituted absolute monarchy without political parties in 1962.

The people's movement of 1990 resulted in constitutional monarchy. This unravelled with the Maoist insurgency that began in 1996 and the palace massacre of 2001. The present Constitution is the seventh in 67 years, and follows the interim Constitution of 2007. Back in 1959, Jennings had told his bemused officer-in-waiting, Damodar Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana: "In underdeveloped countries like yours, never entertain the unnecessary ambitions of

unnecessary people." Nepal's leaders must shake themselves free from this retrograde advice.

What is now needed is revisiting the delimitation of state boundaries. Tharus and Madhesi feel they are victims of gerrymandering, with 12 of the 20 Terai districts merged into contiguous hill states. The proportional inclusion in state organs of the disadvantaged groups and delimitation of constituencies on the basis of population are the two other major demands. Both these provisions were part of the 2007 interim Constitution. Lok Raj Baral, an eminent public figure, says "there is no other alternative but to amend the Constitution immediately".

India is being blamed for the mess in Nepal—for doing too little, too late. India has often held its hand in Nepal, fearing the charge of big-brotherly behaviour. It has been reticent about commenting on the nature and content of Nepali federalism because of the visceral nature of the internal divisiveness it has created. It has, therefore, sought an equitable outcome on the issue without concerning itself with the fine print and processes.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's messaging cannot be faulted. On his first visit to Nepal that resonated with Nepalis across the political spectrum, he called for a constitution representing ideas that came from the womb of the people's movements. Last November, he spoke of the need for consensus, avoiding majoritarianism. A month ago, he advised PM Sushil Koirala to initiate a dialogue for the widest possible consultations. These pointed messages were ignored.

A disjunction between India and Nepal suits neither country. It is disingenuous of the ruling coalition's leadership-in-waiting to suggest buying India's support in return for a quid pro quo on the bilateral agenda. India has a people-centric relationship with Nepal that is not always determined by the dynamics between South Block and Singha Durbar. "If one side gets hurt," said constitutional expert Shambhu Simkhada, "the other feels the pain".

Before further loss of lives, harm to the Nepali economy and damage to India-Nepal ties, the Nepali leadership must show sagacity in bringing back all their people together, just as they did during the peace process. Restoring trust, ending repression, pausing the one-sided celebrations, and addressing the Janajati and Madhesi concerns through a political agreement can pave the way for a comprehensive amendment of the new Constitution. Nepal cannot find lasting stability so long as the subaltern concerns remain unaddressed.

Illustration by SAURABH SINGH



**Nepal cannot find lasting stability so long as the subaltern concerns remain unaddressed.**

*Jayant Prasad is a former Indian ambassador to Nepal*





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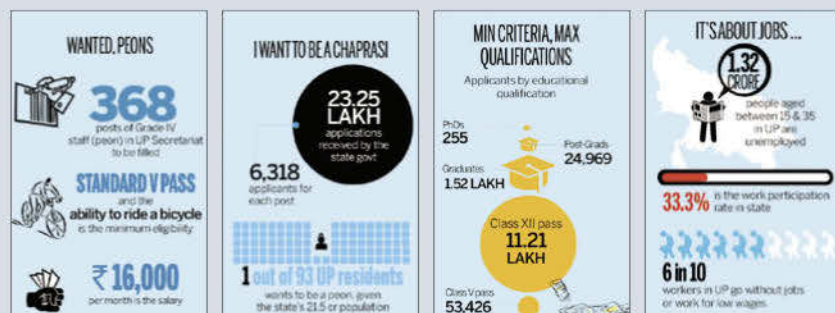
**No stamp of approval** In an era of emails and digital communication, politicians are fighting over postage stamps. <http://bit.ly/10rzOEI>



**Let's rice to the occasion** Rice is no longer a favourite among Indians with wheat consumption growing at a faster rate over the years. <http://bit.ly/1KJTV39>



**Jobless** When the UP government advertised 368 peon vacancies, 23 lakh applicants lined up and most of them were overqualified. <http://bit.ly/1Pnei5V>



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Do you know why Narendra Modi has released a Rs 125 coin? 7,461



## MOST RETWEETED & FAVOURITED

AAP govt bought onions at Rs 18/kg and sold to Delhiites at Rs 30/kg, RTI replies 288

Schools shut, exams postponed, trains brought to a halt as PM Modi visits Varanasi 210

What left Kapil Sharma teary-eyed? 151



## MOST READ ONLINE STORIES

India Today website home page 246,980

Snapped: Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan and Amitabh Bachchan's granddaughter Navya in one frame 53,006

Hrithik Roshan's ex-wife Sussanne Khan tying the knot again? 47,513



## THREE'S A CROWD



Illustration by SAURABH SINGH

During his week-long visit to the US from September 24, PM **Narendra Modi** is likely to find his hosts more than a little preoccupied. Recent headlines there have been dominated by the visit of Chinese President **Xi Jinping**—the only one among foreign leaders visiting the UN session to be welcomed with a White House State Dinner on September 25. The Xi dinner is significant as China is the only country given two state welcomes in the White House during Barack Obama's tenure—a reflection of diplomatic priorities. While Manmohan Singh was given a state dinner in 2009, Xi's predecessor Hu Jintao was also accorded a state reception in 2011. Modi will likely have to wait for the White House's next occupant for his turn to get an invite.



## BOLT FROM THE BLUE

Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee President **G. Parameshwara** is in the race for the post of deputy CM for the past two years. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has stopped him from occupying the post because he doesn't want to create a parallel power centre. The CM keeps up the digs. "I'm told that Parameshwara was an excellent athlete during his youth," Siddaramaiah recently said. "Had he pursued athletics, he could have been our very own Usain Bolt eclipsing his world record," he added.



HARISH DWIVEDI (LEFT) AND SANJAY PRATAP JAISWAL

## POLITICAL SLUGFEST

**What** Between BJP's MP from Basti, Harish Dwivedi, and Congress MLA from Rudhauri, Sanjay Pratap Jaiswal, in Uttar Pradesh.

**How** Tried to scratch each other's face and exchanged abuses in public at the district collectorate on September 17.

**Why** Both were competing to issue backward caste certificates to the members of a community.

## GO, GOA

Defence firms are miffed with **Manohar Parrikar's** plan to move the Ministry of Defence's biennial exhibition to Quitol in Goa. Defexpo India-2016 is set to be held in the Defence Minister's home state between March 28 and 31 next year. The last eight instalments of India's largest land, naval and internal homeland security systems exhibition were held in Delhi's Pragati Maidan. What has upset the industry is a steep 80 per cent increase in the rate for space. The ministry has increased charges from Rs 11,000 per sq ft in 2014 to Rs 20,000 per sq ft.



YASBANT NEGI

## THE RESCUE ACT

While Union Home Minister and Lucknow MP **Rajnath Singh** has been unable to pay heed to people's request in his home district Chandauli, Uttar Pradesh PWD Minister **Shivpal Singh Yadav** seems to have come to his rescue. Yadav has been busy showering largesse on Chandauli. On September 10, he inaugurated development works of more than Rs 50 crore and allocated another Rs 100 crore for road repairs and canals, demands for which were pending for several years. Yadav's move clearly pre-empted the 2017 assembly election when the BJP plans to target the Samajwadi Party.



## GOING AFTER GRAFT

Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje recently appointed **Dinesh M.N.** as inspector general of police, Anti-Corruption Bureau, to expose corruption in high places. The new IG has already delivered on her promise by netting Ashok Singhvi, principal secretary (mines) in an alleged bribery case. Raje gave a swift nod to Singhvi's arrest after ACB raids recovered Rs 4.85 crore in alleged bribes. The IPS officer mounted a two-month long operation on the suspects before seizing what is one of the largest bribe amounts in the state. Dinesh has ironically spent seven years in prison as an accused in the Sohrabuddin alleged fake encounter case and is currently out on bail.

## THE WEEK IN POLITICAL LARGESSE

A look at the 'special' packages doled out

### FARMERS

Telangana Chief

Minister K. Chandrasekhar

Rao has increased the payout to families of farmers, who committed suicide due to financial distress, from Rs 1.50 lakh to Rs 6 lakh.

### RICKSHAW-PULLERS

PM Narendra

Modi distributed 501 cycle rickshaws and 101 e-rickshaws in Varanasi among the needy.



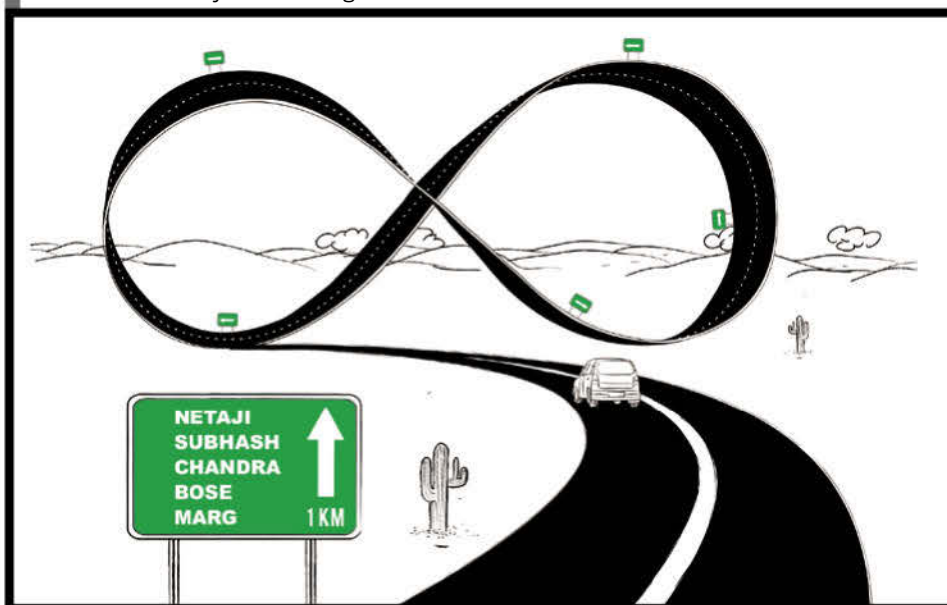
## RADIO RAMAN



Chhattisgarh CM **Raman Singh** has followed in the footsteps of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Starting September 13, Singh has fixed the second Sunday of each month for his radio programme "Raman ke Goth" (Raman's talk). But unlike the PM's open-ended address, Singh speaks only for 15 minutes. In his first address, he expressed deep concern over the prevailing drought conditions in the state and assured to provide all possible help to farmers. He also focused on culture, education and welfare schemes.

## FREE FOR ALL

by Saurabh Singh



## RAHUL'S BACKROOM BOY

The much-awaited AICC reshuffle is due after the Bihar elections. Party insiders say the list will be a perfect mix of youth and experience. While Rajya Sabha deputy leader Anand Sharma and RPN Singh are likely to be made general secretaries, the surprise appointment is likely to be that of **K. Raju** as Rahul Gandhi's political secretary. Raju, a native of Andhra Pradesh, heads the party's Scheduled Caste cell. The former IAS officer's style bears an uncanny resemblance to Congress president Sonia Gandhi's political secretary Ahmed Patel—quiet, unassuming and a backroom player.



## LULL BEFORE THE STORM?

This may have helped maintain 'peace', but the over-zealousness of the police could well come back to haunt the first family of Punjab. More than eight years since the Akali-BJP dispensation came to power, nearly 6,000 protesting farmers, schoolteachers, jobless youths, government employees and wage workers have had criminal cases filed against them in just two districts—Bathinda, represented by Harsimrat Kaur Badal, and Muktsar, which includes CM **Parkash Singh Badal's** assembly constituency Lambi. With little over a year left for the next assembly polls, things could get sticky for the Badals.



## PARTY TIME

The Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam is all set to launch a third front in Kerala, opposed to both the Congress-led ruling UDF and the CPI(M)-headed LDF. SNDP Yogam's General Secretary **Vellapally Natesan** has garnered the support of like-minded Hindu outfits to launch the new party after the November local body elections. In a show of strength planned between November 15 and 30, a procession from Kasargod will culminate in a rally in Thiruvananthapuram. It is part of Natesan's grand plan to form the front with the BJP and others ready to ally with them well ahead of next year's assembly polls in the state.



with ANANTH KRISHNAN, KAUSHIK DEKA, AMARNATH K. MENON, SANTOSH KUMAR, PIYUSH SRIVASTAVA, ASIT JOLLY, ARAVIND GOWDA AND ASHISH MISRA



# SICK & TIRED

Shortage of doctors is playing havoc with the medical system; and the government is doing nothing about it

## ON LIFE SUPPORT

**125 crore**

Population of India



**9.36 lakh**

Registered doctors  
(as of Dec 2014)



Approx.

**1 doctor  
for 1,700  
people**



WHO norm  
**1:1,000**

India needs  
**4 lakh more doctors**  
by 2020 to achieve WHO norm

## SPECIALISTS IN DEMAND

**67.6%**

of sanctioned posts of specialists at  
community health centres (CHCs) are

**vacant**

### VACANT POSTS AT CHCs



**74.6%**  
Surgeons



**65.4%**  
Obstetricians &  
gynaecologists



**62.8%**  
Pediatricians

Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare;  
Data as of March 31, 2015

## MORE MEDICAL SCHOOLS?

**381**

Medical colleges  
in India

**187**

More medical  
colleges needed

**50,078**

Medical students  
taken in a year

**15,800**

More seats  
needed

Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

## NO SUPPORT SYSTEM

Nurses/Midwives

**16.7 lakh**

Registered



**7.56 lakh**

Auxiliary  
(ANMs)

Health workers



INDIA

**19\***

per 10,000 people



WHO norm

**25**

per 10,000 people

(\*Doctors 6, nurses/ midwives 13)

## QUEUING UP FOR BEDS



**1,946**

Average population per government hospital bed

WHO norm



**5**

beds per  
1,000 people

1 government  
hospital serves

**61,744**



## WHAT IS THE GOVT DOING?



Delay in granting  
permission to admit students  
& slow inspection of college  
infrastructure led to loss of

**1,170 seats**  
in 2014-15

Sources: Medical Council of India,  
WHO, media reports; figures for 2014

Manvi Gautam

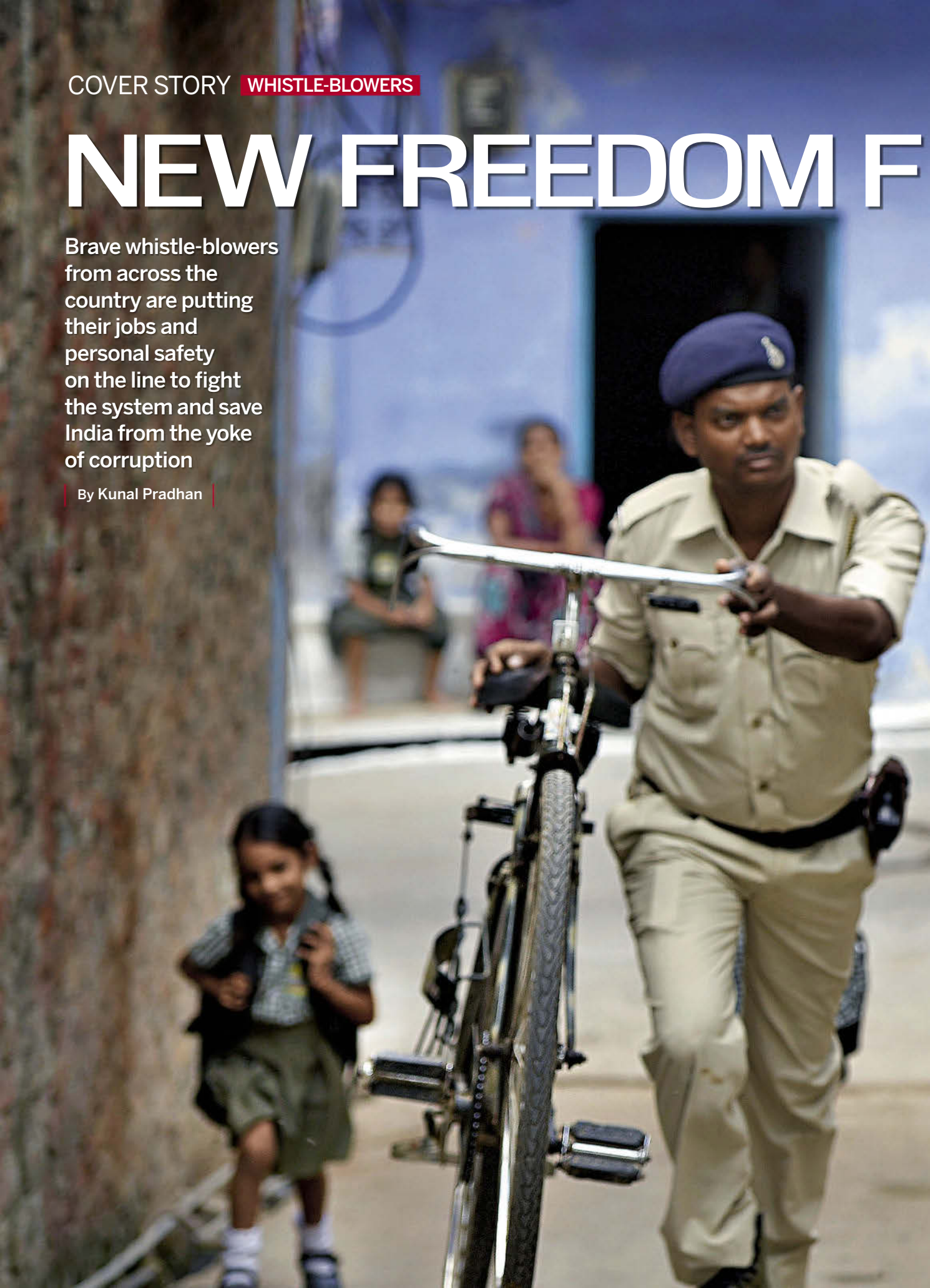


COVER STORY **WHISTLE-BLOWERS**

# NEW FREEDOM F

Brave whistle-blowers from across the country are putting their jobs and personal safety on the line to fight the system and save India from the yoke of corruption

By Kunal Pradhan





# IGHTERS

## Ashish Chaturvedi 28

Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh

Active since 2010

Crusading against Vyapam, an education and recruitment scam in Madhya Pradesh in which thousands of students have allegedly been admitted to government colleges in exchange for cash, in collusion with government officials.

Took on **CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan** by allegedly exposing his government's links to the scam.

**Biggest victory** CBI probe ordered in the case.

**Case status** Being heard by the Supreme Court.

“If we can clean our medical and education systems, we can do away with half of the country's problems.”



## COVER STORY

It's a sunny afternoon at New Delhi's All-India Institute of Medical Sciences. In the belly of this bustling micropolis, inside its relatively muted administrative wing, resident fire-starter Sanjiv Chaturvedi is gazing vacantly at the most "important" document that will reach his desk this week—a request for stay in the hospital guesthouse. India's most celebrated Forest Service officer, with a Ramon Magsaysay Award to go with a Manjunath Shanmugam Integrity Award, Chaturvedi was relentlessly exposing one corruption scandal after another in the AIIMS campus while on deputation as the institute's chief vigilance officer between 2012 and 2014. It made him an object of unease for some, and won him immense goodwill from some others, which is evident by how numerous junior staff members offer to take you right to his door when you ask for directions to his office. But since last year, even though he brought an unprecedented 78 wrongdoers to book during his two-year stint, Chaturvedi has been reduced to dealing with meaningless files as a deputy secretary in the institute. He neither has any real work nor any powers. A request for his move to Arvind Kejriwal's Delhi government as an officer on special duty is yet to be granted by the Narendra Modi regime, which has been steadfastly promising the shift since February, and just as steadfastly not signing off on it.

This is not the first time that Chaturvedi has been punished for his "disruptive" nature. Given the bogus charges he's had to face over the last decade—bribery, theft, even abetment to suicide—being relegated to doing pointless paperwork is a minor chastisement. But more on that later.

Chaturvedi is one of a rare breed of campaigners, both inside and outside government, which is striving tirelessly to expose systemic corruption in public life and challenging a culture of complicity. They come from across the length and breadth of our land, linked by a seamless network of WhatsApp groups and late-night phone calls that allows them to draw strength from one another. They have taken on wrongdoing at various levels of public administration, often putting themselves at

ROHIT CHAWLA



### Vishwanath Chaturvedi 49 Rae Bareilly, UP

**Active since** 2003

**Crusading against**

Political corruption, including a food scam in UP and alleged wealth amassed by SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Took on **The SP to file petitions against Mulayam, Akhilesh, Dimple and Prateek.**

**Biggest victory** In 2007, the Supreme Court ordered a CBI

probe into Mulayam's alleged disproportionate assets.

**Case status** Hearing completed. The judgment is lying reserved since 2009.

“

I've felt like throwing in the towel several times, but something makes me hang on.”

grave personal risk. They have helped unearth a series of big-ticket scams in recent years—from Vyapam in Madhya Pradesh to the alleged disproportionate assets of top politicians in Uttar Pradesh, from Adarsh in Maharashtra to a transport lobby in Haryana, and from illicit mining in Gujarat to a spurious drugs racket in New Delhi. They're well aware that several of their

ilk—Indian Engineering Service officer Satyendra Dubey, who was fighting corruption in the Golden Quadrilateral highway project in Bihar, and Indian Oil Corporation manager S. Manjunath, who had sealed a petrol pump in Uttar Pradesh for selling adulterated fuel—have been brutally silenced for their agitation. Yet these crusaders fight on, taking inspiration rather than anxiety





## Amitabh Thakur 47

IPS Officer, Uttar Pradesh

Active since 2007

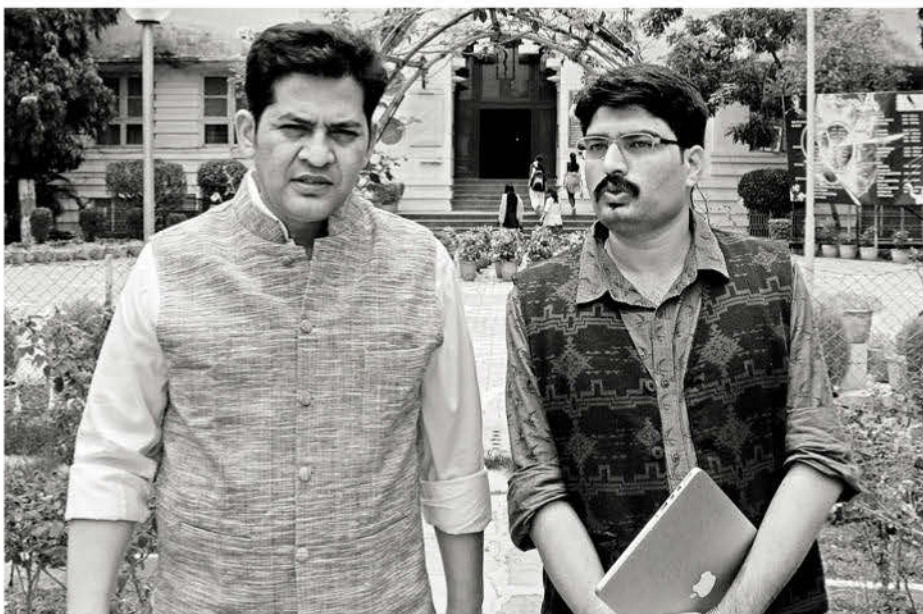
**Crusading against** Corruption in government offices and the land mafia in Noida.

Took on **UP minister Gayatri Prajapati on an illegal mining charge and Noida Authority engineer Yadav Singh in an alleged land scam.**

**Biggest victory** In August 2015, the Allahabad High Court handed over the Yadav Singh probe to the CBI.

**Case status** The UP government moved Supreme Court but case was dismissed.

“The system tries to malign you. But you have to carry on.”



## Prashant Pandey 37

and **Anand Rai 38**

Indore, Madhya Pradesh

Active since 2014

**Crusading against** Corruption in admissions and job recruitment.

Took on **Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan.**

**Biggest victory** Rai, a government medical officer, and Pandey, a software expert, along with student Ashish Chaturvedi, exposed the multi-crore Vyapam scam.

**Case status** CBI probe on.

“Humans are more advanced than technology.”

PAWAN BHAWAR

from those who lost their lives.

They are often described as whistle-blowers, but they're more than that. “Whistle-blowers blow the whistle and run away. We're here, out in the open, on the front lines,” Chaturvedi says. So how to aptly describe them? In a country still suffering under the yoke of corruption 68 years after Independence, they are the new freedom fighters.

## POWER OF INFORMATION

The need for this small but growing cult of whistle-blowers stems from an opaque and secretive socio-political culture that stemmed partly due to scarcity of resources, and partly due to vested interests in commercial contracts during the Licence Raj. It led to

corruption in the smallest civic functions—such as telephone allotments, cooking-gas connections, school admissions, hospital beds—to larger scams in construction, transport, procurement of natural resources, and so on. While corruption in civic amenities affected the *aam aadmi*, and could be theoretically exposed by anyone, bigger scandals could only be revealed by government officials privy to such sensitive information.

Over the last decade, this gap has been bridged, largely through the Right to Information Act, 2005. With this legislation, a common citizen is able to inquire about government spending, examine transactions for proof of wrongdoing, and then take the culprits to court. This environment

of transparency has been supported by all the four Estates. Parliament has pushed the Whistle-Blowers Protection Act, 2011, which, although controversial, attempts to offer protection to insiders who expose wrongdoing in government departments. The Supreme Court too has observed that it is okay for whistle-blowers to reveal sensitive government documents if the idea is to protect public interest. To complement their efforts, an energetic, and sometimes over-invasive, media has developed a proclivity for hard-hitting debates and sting operations. But despite all this, our system by and large still ends up favouring protectionism over accountability. This is where our ‘new freedom fighters’ step in.

Even in the far more transparent



**Sanjiv Chaturvedi** 40  
IFS Officer  
Haryana and New Delhi

Active since 2006  
Crusading against  
Corruption in govern-  
ment—from forest  
conservation in Haryana  
to AIIMS, New Delhi.

Took on **A strong political  
lobby in the Haryana  
forest department and  
busted a series of  
scams as AIIMS's  
vigilance officer.**

**Biggest victory** From  
2012-14, he exposed more  
than 200 corruption  
cases in AIIMS. In 2015,  
he was given the Ramon  
Magsaysay Award.





**Case status** Cleared his name in a slew of bogus cases. Now, fighting to get a deputation to the Delhi government as an OSD.

“

**There are many in the service who are either corrupt or look the other way. Too few raise their voice.”**

United States, for example, Julian Assange and Edward Snowden have been path-breakers—not because of the information they leaked, but because they could locate their facts in the bigger story. It's when a small complaint is reflective of a larger phenomenon that whistle-blowing is music.

Ratna Ala, for example, is the 36-year-old son of a shepherd from Rangpar village in the Wankaner taluka of Morvi district in western Gujarat. He has been blind since birth but can read and write in Braille. In 2006, while listening to a radio programme about the RTI Act, Ala immediately thought about a two-kilometre stretch on the road that connected his village to the highway. The road was potholed, and encroached upon by thorny Babool bushes, making it hard for him to navigate it without help. When he finally got an RTI reply from his tehsil, he learnt that, on paper, the road had been repaired twice in the last two years. He took his findings to a local newspaper, which splashed the story, and soon the road was being repaired and relaid by a government that was forced to spring to action. Today, Rangpar is serviced by a smooth winding road that is repaired routinely.

Vindicated and emboldened, Ala decided to use RTI as a weapon to right several wrongs—in 2007, he prevented 281 acres of the village grazing land from being handed over to a clock factory by local officials without permissions from the state government; in 2011, he found 154 bogus names in the voters' list for the sarpanch elections in his village; and, in 2014, busted a fledgling illegal mining racket, withstanding threats to life and refusing bribes. Ala, who is now Rangpar's deputy sarpanch, asks, “Who needs eyes to have a vision?”

## RUN RAGGED

The idea of the whistle-blower is, at its heart, a romantic one. A solitary warrior, braving the odds, falling and getting up, slaying the demon. It's stuff of legend that mythology, literature, and cinema thrive on. In reality, however, the stories of whistle-blowers are often painfully ordinary. “Whistle-blowers

are treated as troublemakers rather than heroes in our country,” says social commentator Santosh Desai. “They are threatened, discredited, ostracised. They end up going to court every day, day after day. Their stories are not always spectacular enough to spark a revolution.” Whistle-blowing in India is less about the Power of One and more about the anxiety of what will happen to the One Who Dares.

In spite of this, there is a bunch of activists which puts itself in the line of fire by directly taking on top politicians. One of them is Vishwanath Chaturvedi. Now 49 years old, the former Congress sympathiser lives on the first floor of a humble two-storey house in West Delhi's Rajinder Nagar. In a room adorned by plastic lilies, an imitation-antique sofa, metal swans and wooden camels—all remnants from middle-class India of the '80s—Chaturvedi sits armed with a stack of legal documents that précis his story. In 2005, he had filed a case against Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav, current Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, his wife Dimple Yadav, and his stepbrother Prateek Yadav, for allegedly amassing illegal wealth. He got this information through RTI queries and through simple back-of-the-book calculations based on the Yadav family's declared assets with the Election Commission. The Supreme Court called in the CBI in 2007. Hearing has been completed but the judgment has been lying reserved since 2009.

Chaturvedi, who hails from Shivgarh, in Congress President Sonia Gandhi's constituency Rae Bareilly, has been hounded over the years on various trumped-up charges, some as petty as electricity theft. When threats and crank calls in the middle of the night became a regular feature, he left Uttar Pradesh and fled to New Delhi nine years ago. His fortunes and his mental peace change routinely these days, he says, depending on how cozy or cold the Samajwadi Party is with the central government of the day. When their relations are tense, he gets a 24x7 security guard for protection, as per the Supreme Court's orders. But when they move closer to each other—as has been the case over the last few weeks





### Kamlesh Verma 38

Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh

Active since 2009

Took on **Former UP CM Mayawati by filing a case alleging improper sale of land by the state government to Jaypee Group in the Taj Corridor**

**Biggest victory** In 2013, the Supreme Court admitted a petition by Verma challenging a high court order in Mayawati's favour.

**Case status** Matter pending with the Supreme Court.

“Someone has to fight the system.”



### Bhadresh Vamja 23

Saldi village, Gujarat

Active since 2011

**Crusading against** Corruption in public distribution system (PDS)

Took on **Fair price shop owners, private contractors building public toilets**

**Biggest victory** In 2011, the state agreed to list fair price shops under the RTI Act. Gujarat became the first state where stock disclosure was made mandatory.

**Case status** Case disposed of, action taken.

“It's more important to live for others, not just for yourself.”



### Ashish Sagar 32

Banda, Uttar Pradesh

Active since 2009

**Crusading against** Illegal mining

Took on **Nasimuddin Siddiqui, a powerful minister in the then Mayawati government.**

**Biggest victory** Supreme Court ordered regularising the mining lease of sand in any plot of more than five acres.

**Case status** ED probe is on against Siddiqui.

“Power does not give you the right to loot the people.”



### S.K. Lamba 76

Mumbai, Maharashtra

Active since 2006

**Crusading against** Corruption in Adarsh Housing Society

Took on **Politicians, army officers**

**Biggest victory** In 2010, the retired army major exposed the scam that led to the resignation of then CM Ashok Chavan.

**Case status** A two-member inquiry panel indicted four former CMs, two ministers and 12 top bureaucrats; probe still on.

“It hurts to see the changing values of the institution I used to serve.”

following Mulayam's tacit support for the Modi government in Parliament and his pulling out of the Janata Parivar alliance in Bihar—the security cover is withdrawn by the home ministry. This August 19, for example, the constable who stands below his house was removed in the middle of the night. Despite repeated requests to North Block, his security hasn't been restored.

“The disproportionate assets case is being used by successive central governments, through their hold over the CBI, as a chip to keep Mulayam in check,” Vishwanath Chaturvedi says. “That was not my intention when I filed the case. I was campaigning against what were clear discrepancies in their wealth. But now it's become a political game. I am kicked like a football from one side to the other.”

The petition still achieved one important aim—it was instrumental in bringing the wealth accumulated by politicians in Uttar Pradesh into focus, and increasing the pitch on the alleged nexus between leaders and corporate houses in the name of development.

## THE INSIDE MEN

The psychology of the whistle-blower—his drive, his resilience—makes for an interesting study. When an inconsequential individual becomes larger than life by taking on the establishment, the transformative experience cannot be underestimated. This is particularly evident in the most audacious variety of whistle-blowers—the ones who take on the government while actively serving in the bureaucracy. IAS officer Ashok Khemka, Sanjiv Chaturvedi, and IPS officer Amitabh Thakur are examples of this breed.

Khemka, now 50, had his first real brush with the symbiotic back-scratching relationship that exists between politicians and bureaucrats barely two years after joining the Haryana government. As the sub-divisional magistrate in Sohana in August 1994, he received an urgent phone call from his deputy commissioner allegedly asking him to “arrange for buses and trucks” for a big political



SHAILESH RAVAL

## Ratna Ala 36 Rangpar village, Gujarat

Active since 2006

**Crusading against**

Poor condition of roads in his village and misuse of village pasture land by illegal miners.

Took on **Road contractors, industrialists and the mining mafia.**

**Biggest victory** The visually challenged RTI activist helped save Gauchar (village pasture land) from being swallowed by an industrialist.

“

**No matter how insurmountable the task, if there's a will, there's always a way.”**

rally in New Delhi.

“Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao was completing three years in office and Bhajan Lal (then the Haryana chief minister) wanted to make a good impression,” Khemka recalls. Yet to fully decipher the enigma that government had always been to him, Khemka refused to play ball. And when he was asked to communicate his refusal in writing, he requested the deputy commissioner to first send him written orders. The young officer was immediately summoned to the Haryana Bhawan in Delhi, allegedly subjected to a virulent drubbing by the CM himself, and handed a demotion as an undersecretary with

an innocuous desk job in Chandigarh.

It marked the beginning of Khemka's long career as a “difficult officer” who did not “acclimatise with our political and bureaucratic culture”. In 2004, after he refused to order the mid-session transfers of schoolteachers and blocked the transfer of 20 acres in Badshahpur to a private realty firm for a paltry Rs 4 crore, Khemka was again transferred to a hitherto non-existent post as OSD (Rules). This would be just another on his long list of transfers and “punishment postings”, which at last count stood at 45 over 23 years.

In 2012, Khemka was replaced as Haryana's director general (land consolidation & land records) and

inspector general (land registration), after he ordered the cancellation of a real estate deal where DLF was allegedly overgenerous in the price it paid to Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra. Hugely embarrassing for the UPA government in Delhi, Khemka's exposé was deftly used by the BJP to spearhead its poll campaign in Haryana. But the incumbent Manohar Lal Khattar government treated him much in the same manner as its predecessors by transferring him to the state's archaeology and museums department this April, after he exposed gross illegalities in the transport department.

The problem, says Sanjiv Chaturvedi, who calls Khemka his “inspiration”, is that the establishment is unable to tolerate any officer who disrupts the status quo. Using an analogy from the Mahabharata, he says, “There are three types of officers. The first kind are like Duryodhan—they willingly partake in all kinds of misdeeds. The second kind are like Bhishm—they're not corrupt themselves, but don't stop others from indulging in corruption. And the third kind are like Arjun—they fight against their own people for what is correct. We have too many Duryodhans and Bhishms, but not enough Arjuns.”

A Lucknow boy with a penchant for such lofty prose, Chaturvedi's strength comes as much from his own conviction as it does from his understanding of the service rules that protect the Indian bureaucracy. Despite 12 transfers in five years, one suspension, two chargesheets for removal from service, and false police and vigilance cases, Chaturvedi has not only managed to win all the cases against him in court or at the Central Administrative Tribunal, he has also managed to secure a change of cadre from Haryana to Uttarakhand this August, citing “extreme hardship” in his home state.

At AIIMS, he busted an illegal drugs racket by catching a local medical shop selling spurious drugs at inflated prices to poor patients under the aegis of hospital officials and local



GUEST COLUMN **SHIV VISVANATHAN**

# THE POWER OF DISSENT

The whistle-blower represents the singularity of hope in the age of conformity

In a history of dissent, the whistle-blower has a special place. He is an organisational man and the organisation can be party, church or corporation. He is a man who has been loyal to it and yet sensible and sensitive about the complexities of life. He knows that organisations do not always remain immaculately normative systems. They can be corrupted by power, by nepotism, by cavalier environmental practices. He decides to redeem the organisation by pulling the plug: he is Galahad who wants to restore the original Camelot and will not settle for less. He is the dissenter who knows that the risk he takes can redeem the ideal. Yet that risk is an ethical act, a piece of drama that can open the worlds of ostracism, stigma, boycott. He is the ordinary man forced to be the extraordinary hero, because time and circumstance demand it.

He is one of the great legends of the 20th century. He is Daniel Ellsberg releasing the secret papers on the Vietnam war. He is Julian Assange creating the excess called WikiLeaks. He is Edward Snowden who opens up the world of secrecy and security to show that nothing is private, intimate anymore. Each became a larger-than-life character. Each knew that his act was explosive, that his revelation would change the face of history, destroy the taken-for-granted world that the powerful had created. He knows that the drama is not over when his act of revelation begins, because what he sees as an act of duty is seen in official circles as an act of betrayal. He is seen as a traitor like Klaus Fuchs, who gave the atomic secrets to Russia. He suffers every minute, every moment of exile because he knows he is condemning himself to exile. He might protect the world but he knows his own world is in perpetual turmoil. He knows that no witness protection programme can protect him because his is the original sin of the bureaucracy—a violation of the official secrets act.

A whistle-blower is a person who believes in telling the truth about power because he feels truth has to prevail over power. The sad thing is that he does not always win and nor do the laws built to protect him provide any security. He often realises his only protection is the media and the lime-light because the minute scandal returns to normalcy, he is the sitting duck of every vengeful bureaucrat who believes he has betrayed the tribe. His half life of survival is usually shorter than the myth of the whistle-blower promises.

Yet as a species, he is something new and fundamental. He is not the dissenting intellectual differing on ideology, a

Arthur Koestler or an Ignazio Silone challenging the orthodoxy of Stalinism. He is a bureaucrat, a creature of media and the information revolution, who realises that the truth is only truth when it has the power of a scandal. A whistle-blower is that anomaly, a bureaucrat with a conscience, a dissenter from within the bureaucracy. Yet in challenging the organisation, what he actually exposes is his own vulnerability to attack, elimination, ostracism and exile. He values truth over conformism and procedural loyalty. In the age of the organisational man, the whistle-blower becomes the ethical figure of this century. He points the tragedy of organisation life which values conformity and loyalty over standing up for the truth even if he is labelled “a tattler”, a Judas or a snitch. This individual who cleans up an organisation is often seen by the collectivity as a polluter.

The history of ideas has played up the ideological dissenter, the scientific maverick, but the whistle-blower is that irony, the clerk as hero. He is a master of technical details.

He must know procedures, patents, protocols because it is out of these rituals that he diagnoses the illness of an organisation. He is a technocrat, a professional who fights against the crime of silence, or indifference which kills or perpetuates an existing evil. In an age of surveillance and security, he has to emphasise transparency. Like Satish Shetty, Vijay Pandhare or Avijit Misra, he becomes the new anthropologist and activist of corruption. He realises in a Tolstoyan way that honest organisations may be all alike, but corrupt ones are different each

in their own way. The devil literally lies in the unique details.

It is only now that the whistle-blower is becoming a public intellectual. He is no longer conceived narrowly as a man with a grievance, an epidemic of complaints. He provides critique and his critique lies in the details of the organisation he loves and understands. In generalising his stance, he becomes an ethicist and a philosopher. Snowden today can talk of privacy as a moral problem, of the dangers of security. They are dissenters whose dissent goes beyond the narrow act of protest to become an early warning system to the future of technology and organisation. Each one is singular, each must be prized, saluted and remembered in his own way. The whistle-blower represents the singularity of hope in the age of conformity.

*The writer is a professor in the School of Government and Public Policy at O.P. Jindal Global University*





politicians. As part of his operation, a van laden with drugs worth Rs 6 crore was seized, leading to a larger exposé. The Magsaysay Award in Manila on August 31 was the cherry on top.

Death threats and punishment postings are now a matter of course for Chaturvedi, who says the keys to his mental peace are a simple life (he doesn't own a car, his home in AIIMS has sparse furniture) and regular entertainment (he is a "filmy" who can spout dialogues from Hindi blockbusters at the drop of a hat and watches at least one new release every Friday). On September 21, Chaturvedi donated the Rs 20 lakh he got with his Magsaysay Award to an AIIMS fund for the treatment of poor patients. "When you harass someone, he reaches a point when he's not scared anymore."

It's a sentiment shared by Amitabh Thakur, a UP-cadre IPS officer who served as just another "accommodating bureaucrat" for over a decade until a fight over his own study leave at IIM, Lucknow engineered a change of heart in 2007. From an officer who did not shake the status quo, Thakur became a serial litigant, and filed a slew of public interest cases against anyone and anything with the help of his wife Nutan Thakur. This year, he made a huge impact—filing a PIL against Yadav Singh, an engineer from Noida who had allegedly amassed property and wealth worth thousands of crores, purportedly through his links with top Samajwadi Party politicians. Such is Yadav Singh's clout that a CBI probe ordered by the Allahabad High Court was challenged directly by the Akhilesh Yadav government at the state's expense. Thakur, 47, alleges he has been victimised relentlessly since then. He and his wife Nutan, 42, were even booked in a rape case this July, which, he says, is fabricated.

## NOT ENOUGH PROTECTION

To protect those exposing wrongdoing, the Whistle-Blowers Protection Act, 2011, was passed by the Lok Sabha on December 27, 2011, by the Rajya Sabha on February 21, 2014 and given the President's assent on May 9, 2014. But it came with riders that threaten to

## Ashok Khemka 50

IAS Officer, Haryana

Active since 1992

Crusading against Corruption in public office.

Took on **Corrupt bureaucrats, politicians, transport and mining lobbies in Haryana.**

**Biggest victory** In 2012, he cancelled the mutation of a land deal in Gurgaon between Skylight Hospitality owned by Robert Vadra, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law, and DLF for allegedly violating guidelines.

**Case status** Justice S.N. Dhingra Commission to commence inquiry.

**"Every government decision must pass the 'sunshine test'."**

reduce it to a "paper tiger".

Principal among them is the provision to ensure punishment for false or frivolous complaints, which, activists say, make it more of a weapon for the government and less of a shield for whistle-blowers. One more rider is that every complaint has to be filed with the identity of the complainant, which the Vigilance Commission must not share, except, if it deems fit, to the head of the department against which the complaint has been filed. Activists allege that since complaints cannot be anonymous, whistle-blowers are open to the potential risk of being discovered by people with influence. Another drawback is that the act only covers employees working with the Government of India, and does not hold jurisdiction over state employees.

Instead of strengthening its powers, an amendment bill, tabled by the NDA government this May, could weaken the act even further. If it is passed, whistle-blowers will no longer be able to provide documents and information protected under the Official Secrets Act, 1923, putting classified documents out of their reach. Further, there will be no time limit to determine whether certain documents fall in the exempted category, making it easy for officials to put complaints in the cold storage.

Attempts to weaken the act and to

dilute the efficacy of the RTI, which allegedly began towards the end of the UPA regime and continued under the NDA, are being seen by activists as a bad omen. They say that RTI inquiries are not properly monitored, penalties are not imposed for violations, and several queries are either denied outright or simply not answered. "Over a 10-year perspective, we have gained in terms of transparency. But over three years, this is being scaled back, says Santosh Desai. "It seems the political establishment felt too much freedom had been given away too easily."

It's evident that our 'new freedom fighters' are forced to battle in an arena where the odds are stacked against them. Like gladiators thrown into a pit of lions, their chances of victory are slim. Little incentive to tell the truth, almost no protection, pressure to co-opt, and the innate fear of retribution are all realities they have to constantly live with. Those who choose to step into the cauldron in spite of these hazards are indeed offering a vital public service. It's not always easy to emulate them. The least one can do is stand by their side.

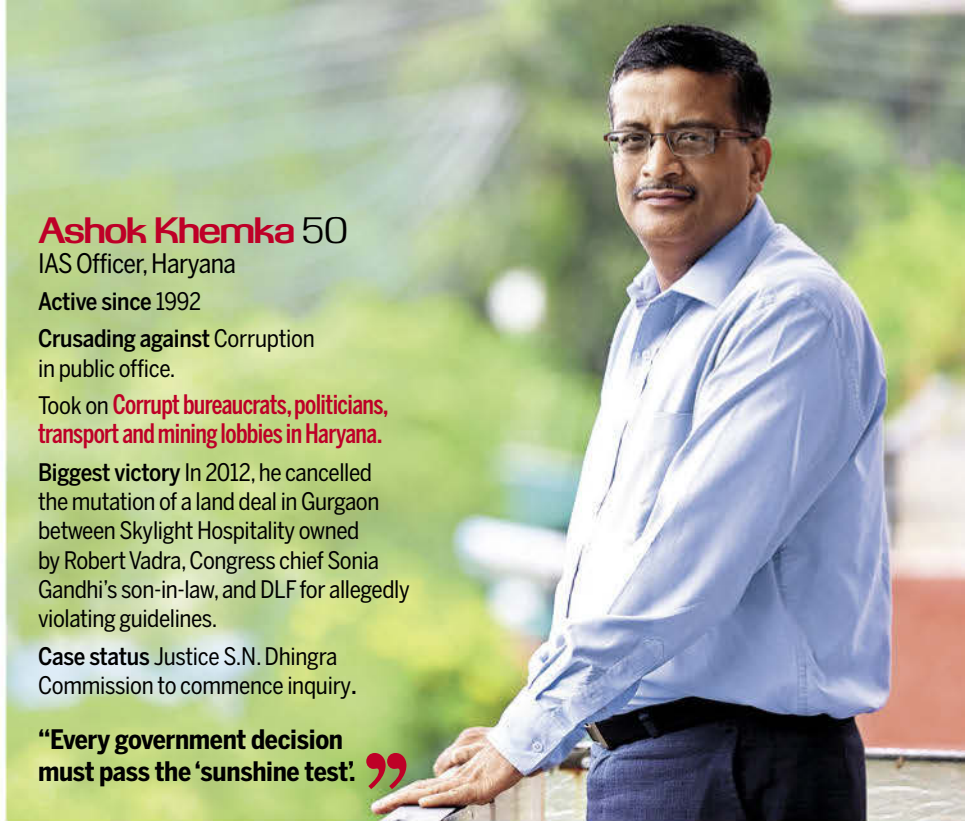
with Uday Mahurkar, Asit Jolly, Piyush

Babele, M.G. Arun and Asmita Bakshi

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SANDEEP SAHDEV

# A BIMARU STATE OF ADMISSIONS

The scandal in admissions to Madhya Pradesh's private medical colleges is turning out to be bigger than Vyapam

By Uday Mahurkar

Around 7.30 p.m. on June 23, as the Vyapam scam kept the nation busy and the Madhya Pradesh government was at pains to explain the mysterious deaths of witnesses and accused, Ritu Varma got a call.

Nearly 30, Varma, had been desperately trying to get admission in a medical college for the past few years. Having failed in her earlier attempts, this was her last chance to get into one of MP's seven private medical colleges, as 30 is the cut-off age for applicants under the OBC quota. The Dental and Medical Admission Test (DMAT) was the proverbial hurdle between Varma and a medical seat.

The caller identified himself as Atul Pandey, an admission consultant. He reportedly offered Varma, a resident of Narsinghpur district, near Jabalpur,

a choice of her college—for a price, of course. By the morning of June 24, the two had had four rounds of conversation. Here's the crux of it:

*Pandey: For Rs 52 lakh, we can even make you a topper (in the merit list, which technically gives aspirants the option to choose colleges). Just leave the Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) sheet at the exam unfilled. We will have it filled up to match the marks commensurate with the money you pay us, and the merit order you want.*

*Varma: Hope I won't go to jail...like the Vyapam candidates?*

*No, DMAT is a foolproof system. In Vyapam one student used to help another as a scorer. Here it is direct. But we can't afford this amount.*

*Then let's settle for Rs 40 lakh. No merit list but you will get admission in a medical college of your choice.*

*We can't afford even that.*

*We can't go below Rs 30 lakh, and you will have to settle for whichever college*



## Scent of a Scam

DMAT has tasted controversy from its first year to the most recent, when technical snags forced cancellation on September 20

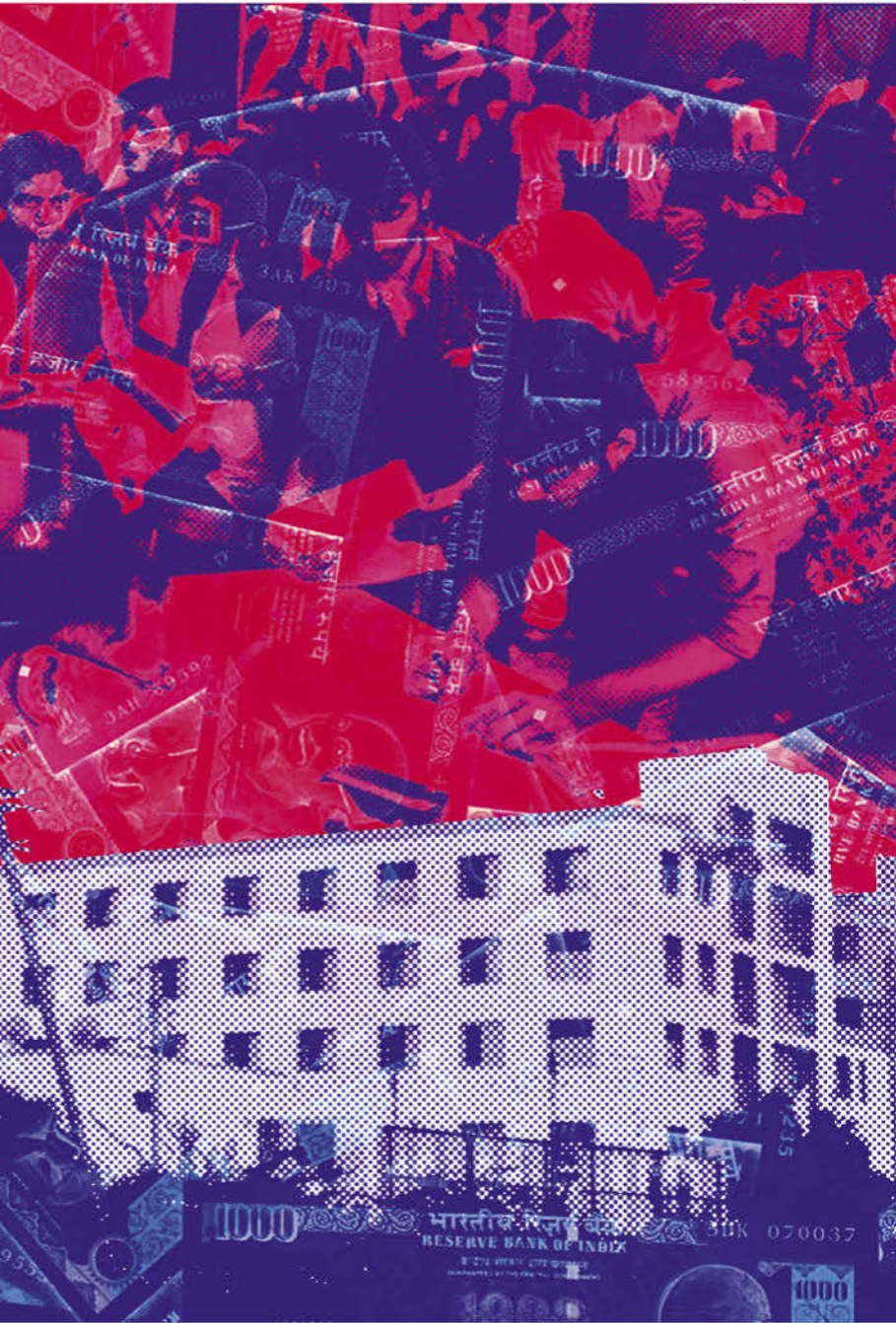
► In 2006, MP government began a separate test for admission to management quota seats in medical and dental colleges.

► Called Dental and Medical Admission Test (DMAT), it is conducted by the state's Association of Private Dental and Medical Colleges.

► As of now, there are seven private medical and 14 dental colleges in MP.

► 15% seats in these colleges are reserved as NRI quota, the remaining 85% is divided 43%:42% between management and general quotas.





*you are assigned.*

Varma, who recorded the conversation, refused the offer. Instead, she went to Jabalpur and met Aditya Sanghi, a lawyer who has filed at least 10 petitions on behalf of students denied MBBS admission due to alleged manipulations in DMAT. Sanghi added the audio of the conversation as evidence in Varma's petition, which pleads the high court to direct the government to order a probe into the admission process of private medical colleges.

Even before Varma had heard the last from Pandey, Himanshu Choyel of Dhar got a call from Delhi. Choyel, who wants to do postgraduation from a private medical college, was offered admission in MS Orthopaedics or MS Surgery—for Rs 70 lakh. Offered Bhopal's LN Medical College, run by Anupam Chouksey who was arrested in 2013 on charges of conducting fraudulent admissions through DMAT, and later granted bail on health grounds, Choyel insisted on Sri Aurobindo Institute of Medical Sciences (SAIMS), Indore. Choyel was told that admission in Aurobindo will cost Rs 1 crore. After some bargaining, they settled for Rs 95 lakh. Choyel got a text message giving the address of their Delhi office to deposit the amount. Choyel has filed a petition before the Supreme Court, seeking a full probe into the scam.

## >>SCAM OF THE RICH

The Association of Private Dental and Medical Colleges (APDMC) of Madhya Pradesh conducts the DMAT for seats under management quota in the state's seven private medical and 14 dental colleges. The remaining seats go to applicants who write the pre-medical test (PMT) conducted by the MP Professional Examination Board (PEB), or Vyapam.

With 15 per cent of seats in private colleges reserved as NRI quota, the remaining 85 is divided 43 per cent: 42 per cent for management and general quotas respectively. According to the APDMC website, the total sanctioned MBBS seats in these colleges was 1,050 in 2015-16. The DMAT scam involves the test for admission to the 43 per cent seats. But this is where big

▶ An estimated **4,000 MBBS seats** and 1,000 PG medical seats have been sold so far, allege whistle-blowers Anand Rai and Ashish Chaturvedi.

▶ Rai pegs the DMAT scam at more than **Rs 3,000 crore** but since it allegedly involves admission to kin of VIPs, the scam has not created a bigger uproar.

▶ Six medical colleges together **transferred 721 seats** from regular quota (42%) to private quota between 2010 and 2013.

▶ In 2014, appellate authority of Admission and Fee Regulatory Committee (AFRC) fined six medical colleges for fraudulent transfer of 200 seats. HC has stayed the order.



# GOING, GOING, GONE

The law says private colleges can charge a maximum annual fees of **Rs 3.30 lakh** to **Rs 4 lakh**. The

<b>MBBS</b> ₹ 30 lakh to ₹ 50 lakh*	<b>MD Radiology</b> ₹ 2 cr	<b>MD Paediatrics</b> ₹ 1.5 cr to 1.8 cr	<b>MD Dermatology</b> ₹ 1.5 cr to 1.8 cr	<b>MS Surgery</b> ₹ 1.4 cr to 1.6 cr
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money is involved, and the reason the state government seems to be stonewalling a proper probe into the irregularities, allege those in the know.

Seen against the Vyapam scam, the DMAT scandal has gone on quietly. Asked by the Supreme Court while hearing a petition by whistle-blowers Dr Anand Rai and Ashish Chaturvedi on why the agency cannot probe the DMAT cases as well, the CBI had said that DMAT “appears to be many times more than the Vyapam scam” in scope and depth. The agency, however, pleaded it cannot investigate DMAT due to a shortage of manpower. With pressure mounting, the MP government in September asked CBI to probe the alleged sale of 721 medical seats by private colleges. Until now, however, no case has been registered in the DMAT scam apart from two FIRs registered by Gwalior police after sustained pressure from Chaturvedi.

Says Himanshu Choyel’s lawyer Vaibhav Jain, who has produced as evidence the eight-minute recorded conversation between Choyel and the “middlemen”: “The roots of DMAT scam are so deep and widespread that despite telltale evidence, no one is willing to investigate the scam—not the state government, not the police, not even the Medical Council of India.”

Rai and Chaturvedi, who have brought key facts to light in both Vyapam and DMAT scams, allege the latter involves the high and mighty—from top IAS and IPS officers to politicians, judges and other officers, all of them alleged beneficiaries. If more than 2,500 people have been arrested in Vyapam scam so far, Chaturvedi claims the figure in DMAT would have crossed 1,000 by now—and most of them people in top positions—had the

case been pursued properly.

The DMAT has courted controversy ever since it came into being in 2006. As secretary to the APDMC, Yogesh Uprit was its first chief. He was also the director and controller of exams of Vyapam in 2004 and alleged to be one of that scam’s key conspirators. Post-retirement in 2005, Uprit was associated with a dental college in Jabalpur. Soon, he was running APDMC and, with the state government’s approval, launched DMAT.

## >>A TAXING TEST

Uprit’s stint in APDMC continued in various capacities until his arrest in May this year for his alleged involvement in Vyapam. Chaturvedi alleges that Uprit had mastered the art of facilitating fake admissions as Vyapam’s director, and repeated it in DMAT. He was granted bail on September 4 after the CBI failed to file a chargesheet. Whistle-blowers and activists allege both the state police’s Special Investigation Team (SIT) and the central agency helped him get bail by deliberately not filing the chargesheet so that the scam does not reach a logical conclusion, as it has the potential to embarrass the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government. The high court had also pulled up the CBI for the same failure. INDIA TODAY tried to contact Uprit on multiple occasions but found his cellphone switched off. He is believed to have gone into hiding since.

Back in 2006, however, Uprit was a man in demand—DMAT was a unique experiment, and all eyes were on him. But even before the results were declared, accusations came flying in. As charges of leaked question papers and sale of seats flew thick and fast, the Chouhan government, bereft of

options, set up a monitoring committee under retired Justice Chandresh Bhushan, who later headed the state-appointed SIT to probe Vyapam. Nine summers on, DMAT still faces similar confusion and chaos. Scheduled to be held in June, the 2015 edition was postponed to July, postponed again in July, before the HC in August gave the go-ahead to APDMC to hold it—for the first time, online. The first online test held on September 20, however, had to be cancelled yet again—this time due to technical snags in multiple centres.

For DMAT’s offline avatar, however, selling seats by manipulating the OMR answer sheets was just one part of the alleged manipulation. The other was getting regular seats cancelled and then transferring them to the management quota—before finally selling them for a premium.

## >>THE MODUS OPERANDI

INDIA TODAY learnt about the modus operandi from whistle-blowers and complaints: middlemen tracked students already studying MBBS to appear for PMT or Pre-PG Test for a sum that varied with courses and colleges. Being students themselves, most cleared the test, after which they appeared at the state government’s counselling centre in Gandhi Medical College, Bhopal, to be allotted the college as per the merit list. The law says an MBBS student cannot appear for an exam for the same course, but with a small part of the bribe money going to some unscrupulous staff in their colleges, these students managed to lay their hands on their original documents, required at the counselling centre.

Ashish Chaturvedi brought the scam to light through a sting operation

fee is approximately **Rs 35,000** per year in government medical colleges. Here's the rate card to "buy" a seat in a private college:

<b>MD Medicine</b> ₹ 1.4 cr to 1.6 cr	<b>MD Anaesthesia</b> ₹ 1 cr	<b>MD Radiotherapy</b> ₹ 1 cr to 1.2 cr	<b>MD Psychiatry</b> ₹ 1.25 cr to 1.5 cr	<b>MS Gynaecology</b> ₹ 1.4 cr to 1.6 cr
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(\*Approximate figures based on current rates; estimated by whistle-blowers and mentioned in petitions filed in the Supreme Court on behalf of students denied admission)

in 2011. According to him, J.P. Baghel, an MBBS student of Gajra Raja Medical College, Gwalior, sat for the PMT that year and secured admission in Chirayu Medical College (CMC), Bhopal, in the general quota. A Gwalior-based man named Sarbendra Jadon allegedly acted as the middleman, and Baghel bribed a clerk at Gajra Raja to get his original documents. Once allotted a seat in CMC, he surrendered it on the last date of fee submission. With no time left in the admission process, it was ostensibly transferred to the management quota and "sold" thereafter. The Gwalior police filed an FIR in 2014 which accused CMC authorities of paying Baghel Rs 1.5 lakh, and Jadon Rs 1.25 lakh. Baghel, Jadon and two others were arrested subsequently.

While not all seats in which the admissions were cancelled were fraud, the figures in some colleges are mind-boggling. In 2013, for instance, 60 of 63 general seats in Index Medical College, Indore, were transferred to the management quota, while the cancellation figure was 48 of 63 seats in CMC, Bhopal.

According to the whistle-blowers, eight of every 10 admission of children or kin of VIPs, including present and former state ministers, both BJP and Congress leaders, top bureaucrats and judges, are done in SAIMS, Indore. An accused in Vyapam, its director Vinod Bhandari has been in jail for more than two years. Such high numbers of VIP admission in SAIMS do bring up "questionable connections", alleges Anand Rai. "This connection is the main reason why the police, and in effect the government, are not filing FIRs in the DMAT scam," he says.

But defending Bhandari, a source close to him says that SAIMS is one of

the best equipped private medical colleges in the country; ergo the beeline of VIPs for admission. Sanghi, Varma's lawyer who has represented many aggrieved students in the last seven years, doesn't buy the argument: "Private college owners are powerful today because of the connections built over the years by admitting the kin of the rich and powerful."

### >> SORRY STATE OF AFFAIR

The state government too has not done its image much good with certain decisions. For instance, in September 2014, Minister for Medical Education Narottam Mishra reportedly rejected then Medical Education Secretary Ajay Tirki's suggestion that FIRs should be filed against private college authorities in the event of any irregularity in the admission process. In the final order that went out, Mishra allegedly replaced the words "FIR should be filed" with "strict action to be taken",

according to Rai, and confirmed by multiple sources. Tirki was transferred soon after. When questioned, Mishra refused to comment on the issue since it is sub judice.

Dr Ajay Goenka, the spokesperson for CMC, Bhopal, questions whether non-stakeholders should intervene in the issue: "It takes years and a lot of effort to build an institution. Can non-stakeholders be allowed to destroy them on the basis of groundless allegations?" About the AFRC's decision to penalise private colleges, he says, "There can be bona fide mistakes but can that be given the label of a scam? In any case, the court has stayed the AFRC order."

Chouksey, also the DMAT secretary, says that allegations levelled by Rai and others are false and driven by individual motives. "We are replying to their allegations in court," he says. According to the FIR against him, Chouksey was accused of conniving with three agents accused by police of taking Rs 1.75 crore from 12 students and then failing to get them admission as promised. This was in October 2013. Chouksey was also accused of tampering with the admission process. He was the APDMC secretary then. He retains the post even now.

As more cases come to light and the high court and the apex court take up more petitions, one can expect more names and accusations and counter-charges to be thrown about. What all stakeholders, including the Medical Council of India, which has been a mute spectator, should realise is the dangers these colleges pose if they unleash ostensibly ineligible medical specialists on the society.

Follow the writer on Twitter @UdayMahurkar



“THE ISSUE IS TWO YEARS OLD AND BEFORE THE HIGHEST COURTS NOW. WE ARE REPLYING BEFORE THE COURT.”

**NAROTTAM MISHRA**  
Minister for Medical Education





# PASWANS WRITE A NEW CHAPTER

As Paswan gets set to pass the baton to Chirag, Bihar's Dalit politics may be changing course: from identity to aspirational

By Jyoti Malhotra

At lunch with his Sri Lankan counterpart Ranil Wickramasinghe in New Delhi on September 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi leaned across to Dharmendra Pradhan, MoS for petroleum and natural gas and the BJP's in-charge of Bihar, and asked, "Chirag *ka ho gaya?* (Have you settled the issue with Chirag?)"

Modi was referring to a statement made by Ram Vilas Paswan's son on the "shock" he had experienced after his Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) was given "only" 40 seats by senior NDA partner BJP. Of Bihar's 243 assembly seats, the ruling party had kept 160 for itself, giving Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustan Awam Morcha (HAM) 20, and Upendra Khushwaha's RLSP 23 seats.

Taking keen interest in the Bihar polls starting October 12, Modi seems to like the go-getting attitude of the blue-eyed younger Paswan, who has over the months emerged as the LJP's key spokesman and the main negotiator with the BJP. At the lunch with Wickramasinghe, Pradhan assured Modi that the BJP would take care of Chirag and the LJP's interests. A few days later, the BJP agreed to give the LJP two more seats from its kitty, although that announcement hasn't been made yet.

It is his 5 per cent Paswan/Pasi vote bank that makes Ram Vilas Paswan such a sought-after ally. In caste-obsessed Bihar, this vote has remained loyal to him, no matter which party the LJP has tied up with. Clearly, that's why BJP President Amit Shah is happy to accommodate Chirag's demand for more seats—from 40 to 42.

According to a Lokniti, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies analysis by Shreyas Sardesai, in the 2004 General Election, when the LJP went with the RJD and the Congress, 58 per cent of Pasis voted for the LJP. In the February 2005 Bihar elections, when the LJP and Congress came together, 60 per cent Pasis voted for Paswan's

party. In 2009 Lok Sabha and 2010 assembly polls, when the LJP contested alongside Lalu, 50 per cent Pasis voted for the alliance. And in 2014, when the party went with the NDA, 41 per cent Pasis voted for the combine.

In the politics of Bihar's Mahadalits, BJP leaders admit that Manjhi got away with 20 seats not only because he was a former CM but also because his Musahar sub-caste is a key Mahadalit caste. The Mahadalits used to once ally with the RJD, but in the last 15 years have shifted their allegiance to the JD(U) and the BJP.

Admitting that this election has become "hi-fi", Paswan says, "It will have a big impact on the national political scenario as there is no CM candidate. So the last 15 months of Modi's rule will become the yardstick against which the NDA will be judged."

K M KISHAN



"I AM A 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MAN, CHIRAG IS FROM THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY. WHY SHOULD I IMPOSE MY IDEAS ON HIM."

Ram Vilas Paswan, President, LJP

So is Chirag taking over the party from his father? “He is the sun and I am the moon,” says Chirag, not denying the handing-over. “*Babuji* has seen good days, bad days and really bad days. I have learnt everything from him.” Paswan points out that he never once questioned his son’s decisions—not when he wanted to join Bollywood, nor when he streaked his hair blonde. “I am a 20th century man, Chirag is from the 21st century. Why should I impose my ideas on him,” he asks.

Significantly, during his short discussion with Pradhan, Modi didn’t refer to his minister for consumer affairs, food and public distribution, even though as Bihar’s senior-most leader, the elder Paswan has his finger on the state’s rambunctious pulse like

few others. He fought his first election as the Samyukta Socialist Party candidate from Aloli assembly constituency in 1969 and even predates the political fault line that Jayaprakash Narayan wrought in the state in the mid-1970s, calling for “total revolution” and spawning the current crop of leaders across the political spectrum.

The rest of the BJP as well as the other alliance partners are also sitting up and taking notice of the changing of the old order in Bihar. When the big-picture analysis of Bihar’s 2015 election is written, it will be noted that the reins of the LJP, more or less, passed from father to son.

With more than 40 years of politics behind him, Paswan certainly seems happy that his Bollywood actor-turned-politician son is inheriting his mantle. “Chirag is accepted by the old

generation as well as the new; any father would be proud of him,” he tells INDIA TODAY. He says it was Chirag who had persuaded him to move from the UPA to the NDA on the eve of 2014 General Election after a prolonged, eventually futile, wait for Rahul Gandhi to reply to several missives from Chirag. “*Babuji*, your values of secularism and anti-communalism and social justice are very important, but equally important is self-respect,” Chirag told me. It was time to move on,” says Paswan.

Young Chirag’s arrival on the Bihar political scene in 2012 was as dramatic as it was valuable for the then struggling party. With Paswan bedridden and out of campaigning action ahead of the by-election for Maharajganj constituency, someone suggested him to call Chirag from Mumbai. “So Chirag came in typical *filmi* style, waving his hand and piercing the crowds. *Laluji feekay pad gaye!* (Lalu got very upset),” Paswan remembers.

Chirag admits to feeling a “big kick” when he saw the crowds responding to him when he went to meet his father in 2012, no matter that his movie *Miley Naa Miley Hum* had flopped. “There is a song in the movie, ‘Katto Gilahri’, which had made me very popular in Bihar. Bollywood and politics are similar in the sense that the crowd responds to you in both professions, only in politics the response is much more immediate,” Chirag says.

It was tough to convince Paswan. “Yes, the 2002 Godhra riots had happened, and several hundred Muslims had been killed, over which he had left the NDA,” the 32-year-old says. “I told him that era was over—like the Emergency, or after the 1989 Bhagalpur riots—the era of Godhra was also over. It took me days to convince him that we had to join Modi.”

But as both of them hit the road for the campaign, the truth is that the Paswans will only remain important to Modi’s BJP if they deliver the seats they have promised him. While Chirag may attract the crowds, it is Ram Vilas Paswan’s social justice credentials that is likely to pull in the votes. The BJP knows that better than anyone else.

Follow the writer on Twitter @jomalhotra

RAM VILAS PASWAN WITH SON CHIRAG AT AN ELECTION RALLY IN HAJIPUR, BIHAR



“BABUJI HAS SEEN GOOD DAYS, BAD DAYS AND REALLY BAD DAYS. I HAVE LEARNT EVERYTHING FROM HIM.”

Chirag Paswan, LJP leader





# BEAR RUN IN BIHAR POLLS

Rahul Gandhi may have put his best foot forward but that doesn't seem enough to pull Congress out of the morass

By Amitabh Srivastava

*Gandhiji yahan aaye, ladein, do mahine rahein.* (Gandhiji came here, fought for the people and stayed for two months).

Rahul Gandhi was too absorbed in his speech in Bihar's West Champaran district on the afternoon of September 19 to have heard the odd stray comments. But just as he began describing the Mahatma's relentless struggle as part of the freedom movement in Champaran in 1917, an apparently disillusioned Congress worker hiding behind a poster to escape the heat quipped, "...and you have not spent even two weeks".

The party worker was being ambitious, of course. Arriving in state capital Patna at noon, Rahul left for the national capital the same evening. Let alone two weeks in the run-up to these elections, Rahul has not spent a total of two weeks in the state. The 23-minute public address in West Champaran's Ramnagar, which kicked off the party's assembly election campaign, was the Congress vice president's first visit to Bihar in 16 months since he addressed a Lok Sabha election meeting in Kishanganj back in April 2014. Before that, Rahul had showed up in Bihar in July 2011, when he met the victims of police firing in Forbesganj town of Araria district. Both were whistle-stop tours, with Rahul returning the same day.

If the Congress lies in a comatose state in Bihar today—for a party in power until 1990 it has won nine and four seats in the last two state

elections (*see box*)—that ostensible nonchalance, of not just Rahul but the party high command as well, has been responsible to a large extent. Both Rahul and the average Congress voter in the state will find it difficult to recall any public movement launched by the Congress in Bihar over the last couple of decades.

That not much thought was put in before scheduling Rahul's first show in Bihar was clear from the venue itself. While it was an apparent attempt to draw parallels with Mahatma Gandhi's Bihar struggle, West Champaran goes to the polls in the fifth phase of the elections—on November 1. Of the 41 seats allocated by alliance partners Nitish Kumar and Lalu Prasad, the Congress is contesting eight in the first phase on October 12 and six in the second phase four days later. "Rahul Gandhi would have served the party's interest better had his tour planners scheduled his campaign in any of these 14 seats," says a state Congress leader.

Rahul, leading the party's campaign, like in the summer of 2014, still seems to be stuck in that calendar year. Having positioned himself against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his pro-poor rhetoric in Ramnagar sounded vague and hollow in the backdrop of meticulously planned election campaigns of Modi's BJP, Nitish's JD(U), and even Lalu, who is trying to recreate Mandal-era politics in a bid to nullify the saffron onslaught. Rahul, on the other hand, has banked on a single agenda for the last few months: attacking Modi for his alleged apathy towards the poor and obsession with the rich.

The Congress might be seeking out



(FROM LEFT) BIHAR CONGRESS PRESIDENT THE RJD AND FORMER LOK SA

a revival route through Bihar but the irony is, the state is a microcosm of everything wrong with the party today. It was on the eve of the 2009 General Election that the Grand Old Party took what seemed a bold step—apparently at Rahul's behest—and snapped ties with Lalu after the RJD offered it just three seats. The Congress won two from Bihar, contested all 243 seats in the assembly the following year, and won only four. It was the straw that broke the camel's back, and also perhaps Rahul's motivation to reinvigorate the Congress in Bihar.

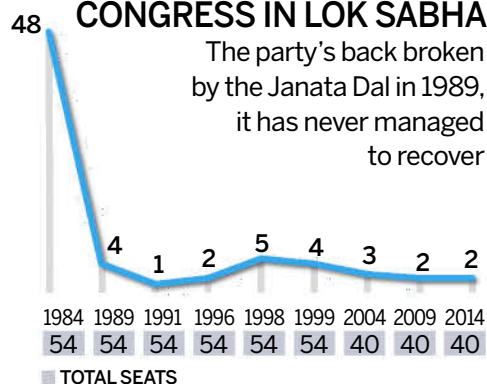
Rahul again threw a jab at Lalu, intentionally or otherwise, in 2013 when he trashed the UPA 2 ordinance on convicted politicians. The government soon withdrew the ordinance, which ultimately cost Lalu his Lok Sabha seat after his conviction. In June this year, Rahul is said to have



ASHOK CHOUDHARY, JD(U) LEADER K.C. TYAGI, RAHUL GANDHI, LALU PRASAD'S SON TEJASWI OF BHA SPEAKER MEIRA KUMAR AT THE CONGRESS RALLY IN WEST CHAMPARAN ON SEPTEMBER 19

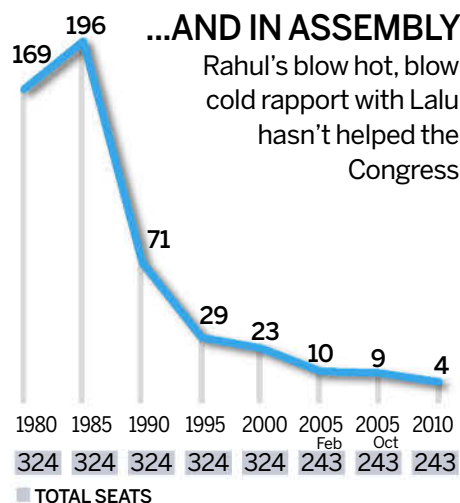
## CONGRESS IN LOK SABHA

The party's back broken by the Janata Dal in 1989, it has never managed to recover



## ...AND IN ASSEMBLY

Rahul's blow hot, blow cold rapport with Lalu hasn't helped the Congress



thrown his weight behind Nitish, a move that forced Lalu to accept the JD(U) chief as the chief minister candidate. The RJD supremo seems to be paying back in the same coin: having skipped Sonia Gandhi's iftar on July 13 to host his own in Patna the same day, he declined to join Rahul on the stage in West Champaran, instead sending son Tejaswi, a political greenhorn.

**T**he party nevertheless turned to Lalu again on the eve of the 2014 polls, and, a year later, is hanging on to the coat-tails of Lalu and Nitish, who between them had brought the Congress to its knees in Bihar.

Having lost the upper caste votes to the BJP and failing to bridge a disconnect with the dominant backward castes, the Congress at least had committed voters among the Dalit and

Muslim communities of Bihar until the 1990s. It has lost even those sections to the regional forces. The upshot: the Congress tally of Lok Sabha seats from Bihar—4, 1, 2, 5, 4, 3, 2, 2—since 1989 looks more like an out-of-form Indian batting line-up's performance on bouncy tracks. The numbers are only slightly better in the last four assembly polls: 23, 10, 9 and 4.

A section of party workers argue that the Congress should have contested on its own in Bihar to attempt a revival. "The party has nothing to lose in Bihar—it has been relegated to a nonentity and could only have improved from here on. But instead of waging a struggle on its own, the Congress is hoping to ride piggyback on Lalu and Nitish again," says Lalan Yadav, a former Youth Congress president now contesting as an independent after the Congress left the Sultanganj

seat for JD(U). But the alliance's supporters in the party contend that a BJP failure in Bihar after the rout in Delhi will revive the pan-India opposition to the BJP, and Modi, and can only help the Congress.

It is difficult to pick the positives from Rahul's or Congress's campaign in Bihar so far, with his first public meeting appearing a wasted opportunity. But as the Indian electorate has shown time and again, it is imprudent, if not downright ludicrous, to write off any party. The Congress may revive in Bihar—in this assembly polls or afterwards. But for that the party has to take some lessons from what another Gandhi did 98 years ago. Even a fraction of the Mahatma's engagement and involvement with the people can breathe fresh life into the Congress in Bihar.

Follow the writer on Twitter @Amitabh1975



By Sandeep Unnithan

**W**est Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee gave a dramatic spin to the story of the Indian state spying on freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's family. As the West Bengal government declassified 64 Intelligence Branch (IB) files on September 18, secrets of state tumbled out of the 12,744 yellowing pages locked for decades in the vaults of the IB headquarters on Lord Sinha Road, Kolkata. The files confirmed a story that *INDIA TODAY* broke on April 10 this year based on declassified papers placed in the National Archives: close family members of the Bose family were under intensive, obtrusive surveillance for over two decades by the Jawaharlal Nehru government's IB. The newest trove of declassified documents revealed the sheer depth of surveillance that would have involved substantial IB resources. Practically all members of the large Bose family who lived at 1, Woodburn Park and 38/2 Elgin Road were under surveillance. They included Netaji's older brother Sarat Chandra Bose, his sons, Amiya Nath Bose and Sisir Kumar Bose, their sisters, Chitra Ghosh and Roma Roy, and Bose's wife Emilie Schenkl in Austria.

"Nowhere has a freedom fighter's family been put through intensive surveillance by his own country," says an angry Chandra Kumar Bose, Netaji's grandnephew. Bose says there is a clear indication from the files that Netaji was alive long after his disappearance on August 18, 1945.

File no. 58 has a March 1948 CID report which quotes American and British intelligence saying the revolutionary was alive. File no. 22 quotes a police diary entry from 1948 where Netaji's aide Debnath Das says he was in Manchuria. A 1949 letter from a Japan-based Swiss journalist Dr Lilly Abegg to Sarat Chandra Bose says Japanese sources believed his brother was alive. Two of the three inquiries into Netaji have concluded that he died in an aircrash in Taipei. The third, the Justice Mukherjee commission in 2006, was not accepted by the

# NETAJI'S OPEN SECRETS

West Bengal takes the lead in declassifying all its secret files on Netaji which opens a Pandora's box about theories regarding his disappearance in 1945



DEBAJYOTI CHAKRABORTY

MAMATA BANERJEE AT THE KOLKATA POLICE MUSEUM

central government.

It was the unexplained mysteries surrounding Netaji's disappearance that spurred a citizens' movement to declassify hundreds of 'Netaji files'.

For reasons which are still not entirely clear, the Bose family letters that passed through the Elgin Road post office near their family homes were intercepted, their contents photographed and filed away. Senior intelligence men like M.L. Hooja and A.S. Syali (who would go on to head the IB and Research and Analysis Wing respectively) debated, in official correspondence, over the import of some of the letters.

"The documents prove the Bose family was spied on. I will only say it is unfortunate," Mamata said at the state Police Museum, where the original documents are kept in display cases.

Not all 64 files released by the West Bengal government are about the Bose family. Most of them date back to World War II and its aftermath, when the British mounted a nation-wide surveillance on Netaji's Indian National Army (INA) volunteers as they streamed back to their homes across the country.

One letter from Subhas Bose's wife Emilie Schenkl in Vienna to Sarat Chandra Bose was intercepted in 1946. Schenkl mentioned that she and Bose were married according to Hindu rites in 1942 but the ceremony was not registered because of the prevailing taboos on Germans marrying foreigners. In a revelation that must have particularly delighted the IB, she mentions the shock of hearing of Netaji's death. 'From the tone and manner of writing the letter,' an officer who intercepted the mail writes in his report, 'it seems to be genuine'.

"Very clearly, this British-era surveillance machinery on the INA and the Bose family was never switched off," says Shekhar Krishnan, Mumbai-based historian and archivist. "It continued to run even after independence."

A special branch letter from the trove of declassified documents reveals one post-Independence government order which first authorised interception of the Bose family letters from their residences: order number 1735 dated September 20, 1948. The special

branch cites this letter to ask its headquarters for a one-year extension in the interception period because it had been carried on 'with good results'.

This interception of Bose family letters and the surveillance on the family members continued for two decades, well after the Nehru era, and at least until 1971. Among the declassified papers is a secret note dated 1971 addressed by a special branch officer in Kolkata to the assistant director in the IB in Delhi. He encloses a report on the 'activities of Sisir Kumar Bose, son of late Sarat Bose, resident of 1 Woodburn Park, Calcutta'.



Declassified by West Bengal

12,744 pages in

64 Netaji files

Over 150

Netaji files yet to be  
declassified by the Centre

Prime Minister's Office

60 files

Ministry of External Affairs

29 files

Intelligence Bureau

77 files

Home Ministry

70,000 pages

Remarkably, this widespread surveillance remained hidden for decades after Independence. And it now emerges why successive governments steadfastly refused to declassify the papers held by the Centre and state.

The BJP, which promised to declassify the Netaji files while it was in the Opposition, is now backpedalling. In December 2014, Minister of State for Home Haribhai Parthibhai Chaudhary said in response to a question from Trinamool Congress MP Sukhendu

Sekhar Roy that declassification was "not desirable from the point of view of India's relations with foreign countries"—a line which successive governments have toed for a decade.

The West Bengal CM's deft move—her September 11 announcement of the declassification came out of the blue—has breathed a new life into what was a dying declassification debate. It has now put tremendous pressure on the NDA to declassify over 150 Netaji files still held by the Centre.

"It's unfortunate that successive West Bengal governments have suppressed such grievous material for years. We don't know how many incriminating papers were destroyed," says Sukhendu Sekhar Roy. "It is now incumbent on the central government to follow Mamata's lead."

Just two days after the declassification, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on his monthly radio programme 'Mann ki Baat', announced that he would meet more than 50 relatives of Netaji in October. Modi has already met the relatives twice before: Bose's grandnephew Surya Kumar Bose in Germany this April after the controversy broke out and family members in Kolkata on May 9. He has promised to look into declassifying the Netaji files but the government is yet to move on it. Home Minister Rajnath Singh said on September 21 that a decision would be taken "soon".

Chandra Kumar Bose, spokesperson for the Bose family, is presently drafting an agenda for the meeting with the PM that will demand declassification of all the Netaji files with the central government; ask the government to write to Russia, Germany and Japan for access to their archives on references to Bose; and finally, an inquiry to solve the mystery of the persistent surveillance on the Bose family.

Political analyst Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay feels Mamata has fired an early shot with the assembly elections less than a year away. "She is beginning to consolidate her base in West Bengal and nothing unites Bengali sentiment than an icon like Netaji Subhas Bose," he says. It's the beginning of a new political battle for Netaji.

Follow the writer on Twitter @SandeepUmmithan



FACE-OFF BETWEEN  
THE POLICE AND  
DEMONSTRATORS  
IN KATHMANDU



NEIGHBOURS **NEPAL**

# NEPAL'S HIMALAYAN LEAP

The Himalayan nation's new Constitution sparks off discontent within and a flashpoint with India

By Post Bahadur Basnet  
in Kathmandu

Nepal's new constitution, promulgated by its Constituent Assembly (CA) on September 20, held out hope for a new era of political stability and prosperity. It was a dream first conceived 65 years ago by revolutionaries who overthrew the Rana regime in 1951 but unrealised after a protracted power tussle between political parties and the monarchy. The new constitution, unveiled nearly a decade after the fall of the royal regime, aimed at paving the way for the institutionalisation of secularism, federalism and republicanism in the Himalayan nation.

But the new constitution and the run-up to it have triggered violence across the country in which 40 protesters, including eight policemen, have been killed and scores injured over the last few weeks. Its proclamation elicited a flashpoint with its larger southern neighbour India. A slow buildup to a diplomatic crisis began

with India indicating on September 21 that the Nepali constitution didn't meet the demands of all sections of society and pointed at the series of violent protests that erupted in parts of the southern plains. The Terai-Madhes people of the southern plains challenged the legitimacy of the constitution after major parties—the Nepali Congress, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Democratic—indicated in June that their concerns were not adequately addressed. On September 21, New Delhi recalled its envoy Ranjit Rae for consultations, indicating its concern about the political situation in Nepal.

A Ministry of External Affairs statement on September 21 said Indian freight companies and transporters had complained about difficulties in movement within Nepal due to the unrest. The statement instantly triggered memories in Kathmandu of a 1989 blockade by India. The year-long economic blockade forced King

Birendra to introduce parliamentary democracy in the kingdom, warning him of the consequences of playing the China card. People began to view India as a 'regional bully', something they expected to change after Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister.

While all other countries, including China, have welcomed the constitution endorsed by 90 per cent members of the CA, India has stood against it. India sent its Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar to Nepal on September 18 to try and head off the Constitution, and 'noted' its promulgation only two days later. "We expected India to welcome the constitution while stressing the needs for dialogue to solve the issues. But the two statements (from India) were uncalled for," said Raghu Pant, a leader of the CPN-UML.

New Delhi's disappointment with the new constitution is rooted in at least half-a-dozen sticking points which it says discriminates against the Madhesis and Janjatis, and which significantly differ from the Interim Constitution of 2007 (see box)

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Nepal's new constitution was in the making for nearly eight years, marked by bitter disputes over outstanding constitutional issues and power tussles among the political actors. But it was a natural disaster that spurred its completion—the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that devastated Nepal on April 25, killing around 9,000 people. Both the government and the opposition parties were severely criticised for their inability to manage the crisis. The Nepali Congress, the CPN-UML and the UCPN (Maoist) realised that they were losing legitimacy and feared a counter-revolution if they continue fighting over the details of the constitution. The major parties had already struck a 16-point agreement in June to federate the country into eight provinces, paving the way for the promulgation of a new constitution.

When the country was finally demarcated into six provinces on August 10, it began to trigger violent protests spearheaded by ethnic outfits, which had emerged in the political vacuum that followed the collapse of the monarchy in 2006.

Maoists had used the ethnonationalism card during their insurgency to recruit cadres propagating federalism based on ethnicity. By the time they realised that such federalism would be problematic in a mixed society, many post-revolutionary forces had already seized the agenda—incorporating the whole of the southern plains of Nepal became the Madhes movement's agenda in 2007.

Their uprising in the southern plains formally established federalism as a guiding principle for the new constitution. The first CA, elected in 2008, was dissolved in 2012 without promulgating a constitution because the largest coalition—Maoists and Madhesbadi parties representing the southern plains—did not have the required two-thirds majority to draft a constitution. The major battle was over the type of federalism. The Maoists and Madhesbadi parties wanted to delineate the federal provinces along ethnic lines. But the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML argued against it, saying it would lead to ethnic conflict as most of Nepal's regions

have mixed populations.

The second elections to the CA held in 2013 resulted in a decisive victory for the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML that shared the same views on the issue of federalism. But the promulgation of a constitution was elusive as ever. The Maoists and the Madhesbadi parties, which were defeated in the elections, argued that

the constitution should be written honoring the past 'commitments' and not on the basis of the electoral mandate.

The movement for ethnic identity-based federalism was weakened after the second CA election results but still had vocal support. The demarcation of provinces in August has led to violence and is primarily the reason for India's concerns which fears a spillover into its bordering states.

Nepal Army personnel were mobilised to bring the situation under control. Soon after, protests began in the eastern plains or Madhes where mobs attacked police posts.

Inclusion and identity are two main demands of the Madhesbadi parties. The constitution ensures 45 per cent total seats in the legislature and state machinery for various groups. A 110-member Federal Assembly will be elected through proportional representation system and 165 through the first-past-the-post system. As half of the Nepalese population lives in the plains, there is an agreement among the parties to allocate half of the electoral constituencies to the plains.

Province 2 in the eastern and central Terai is perhaps the only province that has 88 per cent Madhesi population and is ethnic in character. Its leaders are unhappy. "The three easternmost districts of the plains should also be incorporated in province 2," says Prabhu Sah, a CA member representing the Madhes region.

Another factor for dissatisfaction is that the state discriminated against the Madhesi for long which has contributed to their radicalisation. "There is a big psychological distance between Kathmandu and Madhes," says Rajesh Ahiraj, a political analyst. "Kathmandu still doesn't communicate directly to the Madhesi people."

Federalism has become a complex issue in Nepal. Although the constitution has been promulgated, major parties say they are ready to solve the problems through negotiation. As a big neighbour, India's support is vital in resolving Nepal's political conflict but threats of economic blockades to force political consensus will not be productive. It will only stoke further protests and complicate the situation. ■

**NEPALI PRESIDENT RAM BARAN YADAV (LEFT) AND CA CHAIRMAN SUBHAS NEMBA**



## WHY INDIA IS UNHAPPY

Delhi's disappointment with the constitution is due to 'discriminatory clauses' against the Madhesi and Janjatis

- ▶ It wants reinsertion of a phrase that ensures electoral constituencies with more than 50 per cent Madhesi get 50 per cent seats in parliament
- ▶ It wants reinclusion of the words 'proportional inclusion' in Article 21 of the Interim Constitution
- ▶ It says that Article 283 stating that only 'citizens by descent' will be entitled to hold key political posts in the centre discriminates against Madhesi
- ▶ It wants delineation of electoral constituencies to be restored to once every 10 years as opposed to 20 years
- ▶ It wants change in Article 86 which allots eight members to each of the seven states and three nominated members in the national assembly instead of representation based on the population of the provinces
- ▶ It wants disputed districts of Kanchanpur, Kailali, Sunsari, Jhapa and Morang to be included in the neighbouring Madhes province

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# TIME TO USE THE GOOD OLD GOLD



SHUTTER STOCK

Everything you need to know about the government's new gold schemes

There is an estimated 20,000 tonnes of gold, worth about Rs 52 lakh crore, lying idle in households across the country. In order to reap its benefits, the government has recently approved Gold Bond and Gold Monetisation schemes (GMS), which were announced by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his budget speech. Both the schemes aim to cut down on gold imports, thereby reducing foreign exchange outflow. Here is a low-down on what both schemes offer:

## GOLD MONETISATION SCHEME

Enables depositors to earn interest on their gold accounts.

- Minimum deposit size set at 30 grams either in the form of jewellery or bullion.
- Gold to be monetised will be first checked for purity at any of the 350 BIS certified hallmarking-cum-collection centres.
- Post-consent from customer, yellow metal will be melted.
- A certificate bearing the details such as purity and amount of gold will be provided by the collection centre.
- The certificate should be presented in the bank to open a gold savings account.
- This account will be denominated in grams of gold.
- Tenure of deposit will be either short (1-3 years), medium (5-7 years) or long term (12-15 years).
- Premature withdrawal allowed akin to FDs, but will attract penalty.
- Customer to have the option of redemption either in cash or in gold

## EXPERT VIEW

“From the retail investor's point of view, this scheme is not very attractive. Even though gold is maintained as a part of asset allocation, there is an emotional attachment to it. Although the government is providing tax benefits, it won't be enough to lure retail away from physical gold.”

**Hemant Rustagi, CEO, Wiseinvest Advisors**

“Now that up to 500 grams can be bought in one year, people have the option of buying paper instead of the yellow metal. It will be some time before retail investors warm up to the idea of going the paper way.”

**Gajendra Kothari, MD & CEO, Etica Wealth Management**

(strictly for short-term deposits).

- Interest will be paid in rupees.

## IS IT THE FIRST TIME?

- Earlier in 1999, a similar scheme was announced.
- That time, the minimum deposit was set at 500 gms.
- Interest rate offered was 0.75 per cent to 1 per cent.
- The scheme failed to take off among the masses given the low interest rate offered.

## GOLD BOND SCHEME

- Will be issued by RBI on behalf of the government.
- Can be purchased and redeemed through banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and post offices.
- PAN card details required on purchase of Rs 50,000 and above.
- Available in denominations of 5, 10, 50, 100 grams of gold, both in paper and demat form.
- Maximum purchase in a year is restricted at 500 grams.
- Lock-in period of

five to seven years.

- Bonds to be traded or sold on exchanges.
- Can be used as a collateral for loans.

## WHO DECIDES THE INTEREST RATES?

### GMS

- Banks to decide interest rates for short-term deposits.
- As on date, the interest rate for this scheme is yet to be decided.
- For medium- and long-term deposits, the government will decide the rates in consultation with the RBI.

### Gold Bond Scheme

- Interest rate will be determined by the government based on domestic and international market conditions.

## TAX BENEFITS

### GMS

- The gains from this scheme will be exempt from income tax, capital gains tax and wealth tax.

### Gold Bond Scheme

- Proposal to announce tax benefits on capital gains in Budget 2016-17.

by Jinsy Mathew

Follow the writer on Twitter @jinsymathew

# STEADY RETURNS FROM AN UNSTEADY MARKET

Don't put all your eggs in one basket, stagger and diversify your investments to continue getting rich dividends

Stock markets have been on a roller-coaster ride. The Sensex recently plunged 6 per cent, or more than 1,600 points, on a single

day. Equity schemes too recorded an average 6.4 per cent fall in a single trading session. In such a scenario, investors are worried whether to exit or

continue with their investments. In the middle of this market chaos, here are a few tips on how to reap the greatest rewards from the stock markets:



“ONLY THE MONEY WHICH YOU ARE UNLIKELY TO NEED FOR MANY YEARS SHOULD FIND ITS WAY TO LONG-TERM SAVING VEHICLES, WHICH CAN BE MARKET-ORIENTED.”

DHIRENDRA KUMAR, CEO, Value Research

## INVESTMENT STRATEGY

- First ask yourself how long you can invest the money.
- If you need the money within weeks, do not invest in the stock market.
- For short-term needs, invest either in liquid funds or in bank fixed deposits.
- Invest in stock markets for long-term goals such as child's education.

## CONTINUE WITH YOUR SIP

- You can invest in markets regularly through systematic investment plans (SIPs).
- SIP in mutual funds can help you save a fixed sum at regular intervals without getting into market timing.
- SIP inculcates

financial discipline as money is deducted at regular intervals from your account.

- You get more units when markets are down and less when they are up, averaging out the cost over long term.
- Most funds give weekly, monthly and quarterly SIP options.

## STAGGER YOUR INVESTMENTS

- Systematic withdrawal plans (SWPs) work better when a person invests a large sum in the stock market.
- Invest in debt or equity fund of a mutual fund scheme and opt for SWP facility for monthly income.
- Payouts can be made from capital appreciation and principal amount.
- Investors decide both quantum and frequency of payouts.

## DIVERSIFY

- Do not put all your money in one basket.
- Invest in other asset classes as well such as gold and Public Provident Fund (PPF).
- Invest in stocks through mutual funds.
- Fresh allocations to equities should be made in a staggered manner to large caps. Large-cap stocks will be the first to gain once the market revives compared to mid and small caps.

## REBALANCE YOUR PORTFOLIO

- Other than choosing the right product, periodic review of the portfolio performance is also necessary.
- Change in asset allocation is necessary only if there is a change in the circumstances of the investor or a change in the long-term fundamental dynamics of any asset class.
- None of the asset classes has moved either up or down in tandem. Hence, you can better manage your losses if the portfolio is wisely spread across various asset classes.

by Teena Jain Kaushal  
Follow the writer on Twitter  
@teena\_kaushal



# RIGHT TIME TO MOVE YOUR HOME LOAN?

If you are thinking of transferring your home loan to reduce interest rates, do check all the facts before going ahead



IMAGES BAZAAR

## PROCESS OF LOAN TRANSFER

- Close the deal with the existing bank.
- One needs to submit a letter to the existing lender requesting a loan transfer.
- Based on your request, the bank will give a consent letter/NOC and a statement mentioning the outstanding amount.
- Provide the NOC to the new lender who then sanctions your loan amount to the old lender for an account closure.
- Once the transaction is over, your property documents will be handed over to the new lender.
- The leftover post-dated cheques/ECS are cancelled.

## COST INVOLVED

- **Pre-payment penalty**

## EXPERT VIEW

“The next round of rate cuts may not happen this year. The process to implement the same also takes time. So waiting for another rate cut may decrease the overall saving.”

**Adhil Shetty**, CEO & co-founder, Bank Bazaar.com

“Borrowers should wait for the forthcoming policy review due in September-end. There is considerable build-up in pressure on banks to cut their interest rates.”

**Manavjeet Singh**, MD & CEO, Bestdealfinance.com

There is no pre-payment penalty on floating rate home loans. If you have a fixed rate loan check out with the bank on the penalty amount.

- **Processing fee** The new bank will charge you processing fees on transfer of

a loan. But you can negotiate with the bank.

- **Stamp duty** Banks need to pay stamp duty to the government on the title deed submitted with the bank. The cost is recovered from you.
- **Legal charges** Banks

hire lawyers to validate legal status of the property.

## COST BENEFIT

- Assuming a person has taken a Rs 30 lakh loan for 10 years at 10.5 per cent interest rate, interest outgo is around Rs 18.5 lakh.
- In case the interest rate is 9.5 per cent, then the total interest outgo is around Rs 16.5 lakh, i.e. an annual saving of around Rs 20,000.
- Include other charges such as processing fees and stamp fees while working out on total cost.

## THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR

- It is always better to switch the loan early on during the tenure to save on interest cost.
- There are no benefits of switching the loan when less than five years of repayment is left.
- Check for foreclosure charges, i.e. charge levied by banks for early closure of loan and processing fees charged by the bank where loan is being transferred.
- One should keep in mind that the teaser rate rises after a stipulated time frame. Do not go for loan transfer just because teaser loan schemes offer low rates.
- One should get a statement from current lender stating that property documents will be dispatched within a certain time frame to avoid hassles in future.
- A loan transfer will not be possible if there is an irregular repayment with current lender.
- The processing fee to the new lender can also be negotiated and waived.

by Teena Jain Kaushal

# A HEALTHY PLAN

Given the rising cost of healthcare, an inadequate cover can lead to a financial catastrophe when an emergency strikes

IMAGES BAZAAR



POLICY NAME	POLICY TERM (in years)	SUM ASSURED (in Rs)	PREMIUM* (in Rs)
APOLLO MUNICH DENGUE CARE PLAN	1	50,000	506
APOLLO MUNICH ENERGY HEALTH PLAN	1	3 LAKH	9,962-14,668
STAR HEALTH CARDIAC CARE	1	3 LAKH	20,520-29,640
HDFC LIFE CANCER CARE	10	10 LAKH	583-979
AEGON RELIGARE CANCER PLAN	10	10 LAKH	2,383

\* Yearly premium for a 30-year-old male

## HOW SHOULD YOU PLAN AN INSURANCE PURCHASE?

- The first health cover that one should possess is a plain vanilla indemnity plan, says financial planner Anil Rego.
- Indemnity plan, popularly known as mediclaim, reimburses the patient (reimbursement) and/or provider (cashless facility) for expenses incurred. It covers hospitalisation expenses such as room rent, doctor's fee. These can be subjected to sub-limits and exempted from miscellaneous expenses.
- As age and requirement

increases, this should be followed by a benefit or critical illness plan.

- Benefit plans are complementary covers taken along with other health insurance plans as they offer a lump sum amount as per the sum insured.
- The last option, if ever required, is niche covers.

## WHAT ARE NICHE HEALTH INSURANCE PRODUCTS?

- Niche plans are disease-specific health insurance, covering the treatment cost at all stages, be it diagnosis or advanced treatment.
- These are relatively new

products, covering lifestyle disorders such as diabetes, hypertension. Insurance for cancer and dengue are also available now.

- For cancer, a critical-illness plan takes care of expenses only related to the advanced stage.

## WHY SUCH PLANS? CANCER PLAN

- The data issued by the National Cancer Registry Programme of the Indian Council of Medical Research in May this year shows that cancer is now the biggest killer in India with 1,300 deaths

daily and close to 500,000 annually.

- Due to increased tobacco consumption in society, the claims related to cancer have been on the rise.
- Given the advanced treatment available, cancer survival rate has improved.
- In such a scenario, a cancer plan takes care of the monetary aspect of the treatment.

## DENGUE PLAN

- India records at least 20,000 dengue deaths annually, according to official estimates.
- Recent research by Donald Shepard of Brandeis University notes that dengue burden in India is the heaviest in the world with an estimated 5.8 million people suffering from the disease annually.
- It is these figures, says CEO of Apollo Munich Health Insurance, Antony Jacob, which laid the ground for a dengue plan.

## SHOULD YOU BUY ANY OF THESE?

- If there is a history of cancer in the family, a cancer plan can be considered.
- Since premium is directly proportional to age, one should opt for it by 35 years of age and continue till 60 so as to cover the working lifespan.
- Given the not-so-cheap treatment for dengue, anyone with a Rs 1 lakh cover can opt for a dengue plan.
- A person earning Rs 10 lakh per annum should have a Rs 25 lakh critical illness cover which will take care of a variety of diseases.
- Go for an indemnity plus critical illness plan rather than opting for only a disease-specific plan.

by Jinsy Mathew



# MAKE A WILL, ONLINE

No need to pay high fees to your lawyer for making a will. In just a few clicks, you can now make your will online.

## WHAT IS DIGITAL WILL?

There are a number of ways of transferring your wealth to the next generation, and the best way is writing a will. Also called e-will, a digital will, as the phrase suggests, is making a will online—in a proper and secured manner. It provides digital data of your assets, financial investments, properties and to whom one wants to give his or her property, money and other assets after demise. It is safe, secure and time saving. One can make a will online in just 30 minutes. Digital will helps you to get rid of many contradictions and loopholes while going through the process. One can edit and change the will accordingly as per his/her wish without the hassle of hiring a lawyer.

## STEPS TO MAKE AN E-WILL

There are many ways to make a digital will but it all depends on what digital services one uses.

- Register and create a login ID on the website.
- Pay the fees online (Rs 3,000-Rs 5,000) through internet banking, credit or debit card.
- Select your categories: gender, religion, residential status, occupation, nationality—Indian/NRI.
- Fill in all the details of

your family members and all assets that you own.

- Fill in the details of your assets you wish to bequeath.
- Click in submit or generate e-will.
- Will gets drafted by qualified lawyers empanelled by digital will service providers.
- You will receive a rough draft. Review it and make corrections, if any.
- A final draft of the will will be sent to you through an email and a hard copy of it will be delivered to your doorstep along with a document on guidelines on signing the will.
- To make your will legitimate, sign the document in the presence of at least two witnesses.

## BENEFITS OF E-WILL

- Making an e-will is very easy, automated and flexible.
- Saves time, is secure and keeps data confidential.
- E-will is prepared by professional lawyers.
- It helps you put all your asset information in a systematic manner.
- A convenient way to secure wealth distribution.
- Service available at an affordable price.
- The website and the phone application of e-will is completely secure.



IMAGES BAZAAR

## EXPERT VIEW

“We have cross-pollinated the technology and e-governance capability of NSDL with the legal expertise of Warmond to bring you a proposition at a fraction of the cost.”

**Gokul Das, MD & CEO, Warmond Trustees & Executors Pvt Ltd.**

“A wise decision taken today is perceived as wisdom by the next generation. So if you wish to pass on the wisdom, even after you are gone, do it through your decision to write a will today.”

**Gagan Rai, Managing Director and CEO, NSDL e-Governance Infrastructure Limited**

“Digital will gives you convenience and easy access to the documents anytime, anywhere. It is safe, secure and gives you flexibility of time.”

**Adhil Shetty, CEO & co-founder BankBazaar.com**

## DOS AND DON'TS

- The testator must have completed 18 years of age with sound mind to prepare a will.
- The names of the descendants should be filled correctly in the will.
- The signing of the formal will must be in the presence of at least two adults.
- All movable and immovable assets, including property, FDs, securities, bonds, bank accounts, insurance and other digital assets are saved in the online will.
- One can cancel or revoke the will any time.
- One has to keep a physical copy of the will.
- Asset details should be authentic.

## SERVICE PROVIDERS OF E-WILL

There are several service providers who offer to help you make your will online:

- NSDL (along with Warmond Trustees) has launched EzeeWill.
- Federal Bank and ICICI Bank (provide services to NRI customers). These banks have tied up with NSDL.
- HDFC Securities with Willjini.com
- SBI Cap Trustee Company

by Sarabjeet Kaur

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Auto Report

# NEW ROAD RUNNERS

A NEW BREED OF VEHICLES IS BLENDING STYLE AND COMFORT WITH ECONOMY



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CRETA

FORD FIGO  
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INDIAN  
DARK HORSE



HONDA  
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**auto**  
SPECIAL **HOT WHEELS**

# GEARED FOR

A Clutch Of New Cars Across Segments, Fine-Tuned And Loaded With Features

By Yogendra Pratap

**T**he debate about clean fuels, especially the diesel versus petrol fight, seems to have become one-sided as diesel has become the favourite punching bag of both the media and environmentalists. In this day and age, when natural resources are fast depleting, we need to make the best use of all of them. And it is no secret that diesel is not only a more efficient fuel, it can also be used more efficiently. What the authorities should not be doing is playing favourites—they should set sensible emission limits and whatever fuels or technologies meet those norms should be allowed. Why does all public transport have to run on CNG? If other fuels can meet the

emission requirements, they should be allowed as well. In the case of diesel, it's well known that DPF (Diesel Particulate Filter) can lower particulate matter in exhaust by over 85 per cent. That's what India needs: clean diesel fuel so that all new cars and even old ones can be equipped with particulate filters. And this is what is completely in the government's hands—getting all refineries to upgrade and be able to produce sulphur-free diesel. As for the National Green Tribunal ban on diesel vehicles, it's a knee-jerk reaction to a grave problem that needs to be tackled on many fronts. Neither is the ban practical nor is it justifiable. Automotive regulations need not just a rethink but also due consideration on the technologies, vehicles and

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Hyundai **CRETA** →

## The Big Small Car

Hyundai's much-awaited SUV has created a lot of buzz in the market. As has been the case with most of its successful cars, Hyundai's success in the Indian market is based on a premium offering, packed with features which address the requirements of a trendy young population. However, with the Creta, it has gone a step further.

With Hyundai's fluidic styling already capturing the imagination of Indian customers, it required no genius to predict what the new SUV would look like. In addition to the sculpting that this design philosophy imparts, the crowning glory to the exterior design is the shark-fin antenna. The SUV characteristics have been further accentuated by Hyundai's decision to go in for 17-inch wheels, the largest amongst its competitors, for the top-of-the-line variant.

Hyundai is offering the Creta with a petrol engine or an option of two diesel engines. A lot of the interiors in the Creta have been lifted from the i20, Verna and Santa Fe, including keyless entry, push button start/stop, rear air-con vents and the multifunction display. The Creta is more like a car to drive than a large bulky barge, hence the ride quality is decent for a vehicle of its bulk and height.

—Yogendra Pratap



**ENGINE** 1.6-litre, 4-cylinder diesel **POWER** 128 bhp@4,000 rpm **GEARBOX** 6-speed manual/6-speed

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# THE FUTURE

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Also making news just ahead of the festive season are the new SUVs, the so-called "perfect SUV" from Hyundai and the "premium crossover" from Maruti-Suzuki which is being sold through Nexa branded outlets. This shift towards SUVs is happening all around the globe with people opting for SUVs of different sizes, as opposed to hatchbacks, sedans or even MUVs. Right now there may just be a handful of SUVs in the market, but very soon this number will double. Renault has also already taken the first step in that direction with an SUV-inspired design for its small hatchback, the Kwid. While it may look like an SUV,

the Kwid will go against the entry level cars such as the Maruti Alto 800 and the Hyundai Eon. We also have a drive report on Ford's new sub-4m sedan which the company is making in its brand new plant in Gujarat as well as the Jazz, the roomy hatchback from Honda.

Last but not the least, there is an interesting piece about bestselling cars from around the world, and how choices vary even in the emerging markets of Brazil, India, China and Russia. Automakers have still not been able to perfect a global car that would do well in all similar emerging markets and be the catalyst for the automotive world's next big success.

*The writer is editor, Auto Today*  
Follow the writer on Twitter @yogenpratap



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auto **WHEELBASE** 2,590 mm LxWxH (mm) 4,270x1,780x1,630 **PRICE** RS 13.60 L (ex-showroom Delhi)

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SPECIAL

HOTWHEELS



Ford **FIGO ASPIRE**

## Great Aspirations

Coming late to a party has always been fashionable. In the world of automobiles, Ford has arrived at the compact-segment party a little late with the stylish Figo Aspire. Its bold front-end design is attractive—the Aston Martin-esque hexagonal front grille stands out. Being a compact car, it impresses with a roomy interior. The front seats are wide with a height adjustable seat for the driver. On the safety front, the car has six airbags.

Now for the most important bit—the driving experience. The Figo Aspire uses a modified version of the Fiesta's proven platform. Ford claims an impressive 18.16 kmpl and reduced emissions with the 1.2-litre petrol unit. Ride quality is superb, the stiffness of the suspension allows the car to glide over bad roads—with the only grouse being inadequate damping due to which passengers will feel minor undulations on the road.

Ford has taken its time with the car but it delivers on every aspect that a buyer would be interested in.

—Abhik Das

**ENGINE** 1.2-litre, 4-cylinder petrol/1.5-litre, 4-cylinder turbo diesel

**POWER** 88 bhp@6,300 rpm/ 100 bhp@3,750 rpm

**MAX TORQUE** 112 Nm@4,000 rpm/215 Nm@1,750-3,000 rpm

**GEARBOX** 5-speed

**WHEELBASE** 2,491 mm LxWxH (mm) 3,995x1,695x1,525

**PRICE** Rs 7.24 Lakh/Rs 8.24 lakh (ex-Delhi)

Honda **JAZZ**

## All Jazzed Up

In 2009, when Honda launched the Jazz in India, the market was not open to the concept of a 'premium' hatchback. All that has changed now, and it was about time Honda resurrected the brand in India. The new Jazz looks edgy with smart interiors. The car scores big on space. The 'magic seat' option, however, is available only in the top variant, where seats can be flipped down, the squab can be flipped up, and there are more folding options to help you load a variety of items into the Jazz.

But where the Jazz truly scores is fuel economy with Honda claiming a figure of 27.3 kmpl. As far as ride and handling is concerned, the Jazz continues to impress. The suspension has been redesigned and the steering too. As a result, the Jazz absorbs bumps and ruts rather well keeping occupants in comfort.

—Rahul Ghosh

THE JAZZ TRULY  
**SCORES ON  
FUEL ECONOMY**  
WITH HONDA  
CLAIMING A  
FIGURE OF  
27.3 KMPL.



**ENGINE** 1.5-litre, 4-cylinder turbo diesel

**POWER** 100 bhp@3,600 rpm

**MAX TORQUE** 200 Nm@1,750 rpm

**GEARBOX** 6-speed manual

**WHEELBASE** 2,530 mm LxWxH (mm) 3,955x1,694x1,544

**PRICE** Rs 8.09 Lakh (ex-Delhi)







Photographs by PAWAN DAGIA



## Indian **DARK HORSE**

# Black Beauty

This bike by Indian Motorcycle is dark, very dark. Except the chrome tailpipes and a bit of trim, the Indian Dark Horse is all satin black. By virtue of which, this motorcycle will appeal to a younger demographic than the more 'classic' looking Chief Classic. The matte finish makes the machine look all the more menacing, if you step too close you feel you might get sucked in. Imposing as it may be, there's an inherent balance in the 341 kg motorcycle that you feel thanks to the weight being carried very low down.

The Thunderstroke 111 engine gives you car-rivalling torque, all 139 Nm of it brewing up a storm in the massive 1.8-litre V-twin. We've been impressed before by just how smooth and tractable the big Indian Motorcycles can be and this package doesn't disappoint. Carry too much speed into a turn and it's not the scraping of footboards or exhausts that gets you. It can lean. Though there's a flex from within the bike itself that immediately



**ENGINE** 1811 cc, V-twin  
**POWER** NA  
**Max torque** 139 Nm@2600 rpm  
**GEARBOX** 6-speed  
**WHEELBASE** 1,730 mm  
**KERB WEIGHT** 341 kg  
**PRICE** Rs 21.99 lakh,  
 ex-showroom Delhi

has you reaching for the brakes. Understandable given the wheelbase of this bike, but it's still astoundingly capable of turning.

While the motorcycle loses a few things to the bigger Chiefs like the oil cooler, driving lights and spoke wheels, it also loses some of the heft, thanks to those deductions and the alloys fitted instead. Like the rest of the line, it comes with key-less start, full digital display for revs, range, average fuel efficiency and fuel gauge. At an ex-showroom, Delhi price of Rs 22 lakh, does it appeal? Well, it depends on just how young at heart you are.

—Simran Rastogi



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**auto**  
**SPECIAL**

**BIG DEBATE**

# MONEY MATTERS PETROL vs DIESEL

Over time, diesel cars became the preferred choice as petrol prices kept soaring while diesel remained relatively affordable. Current trends have narrowed the gap between petrol and diesel, so does buying a diesel car still make sense?

By Yogendra Pratap

Buying a diesel car might seem to be the smarter thing to do but more often than not it will take you many years to recover the initial extra that you would have paid for it. So, the basic premise should be to go in for a petrol car and then depending on the number of kilometres you drive every month switch to a diesel-engined car. We presume that you will drive the car for a minimum of five years and that you should be able to recover the extra money you have paid for the diesel vehicle in at least three years.

To illustrate the point, let's take four cars from different segments.

Starting with the Ford Figo, the diesel version of the same variant costs Rs 89,500 more. To recover that amount, given a particular price of fuel (we have taken fuel prices in Delhi on September 1, 2015), one would have to drive the diesel car a minimum of 1,593 km every month for the next three years.

If you notice, this is not only dependent on the purchase price of both the diesel and the petrol car, but the cost of both diesel and petrol fuels as well as the real-world fuel efficiency of both the cars; the latter figure is from our road tests. Therefore, this figure will vary from car to car and also whenever the price of either diesel or petrol fuel changes.

While in the case of some cars

## BESTSELLERS AROUND THE WORLD

The motor car industry is full of surprises. Every market has its own favourite class. The Americans are in love with pickup trucks. No wonder then that the best-seller in the US is a truck. Since fuel is cheaper there, the choice is driven more by utility and comfort.



**USA**  
**Ford F-150 (petrol)**  
FUEL ECONOMY \* 9 kmpl  
EMISSIONS \* 255 g/km



**Australia**  
**Toyota Corolla (petrol)**  
FUEL ECONOMY \* 14.9 kmpl  
EMISSIONS \* 154 g/km



**Mexico**  
**Chevrolet Aveo (petrol)**  
FUEL ECONOMY \* 15.9 kmpl  
EMISSIONS \* 144 g/km



**Japan** **Toyota Aqua hybrid (petrol)**  
FUEL ECONOMY \* 37 kmpl  
EMISSIONS \* 61 g/km



**European Union**  
**VW Golf (diesel)**  
FUEL ECONOMY \* 32.2 kmpl  
EMISSIONS \* 85 g/km



**Brazil**  
**VW Gol (Flexfuel)**  
FUEL ECONOMY \* 37 kmpl  
EMISSIONS \* 151 g/km



**China**  
**Wuling Hong Guang (petrol)**  
FUEL ECONOMY \* 13.5 kmpl  
EMISSIONS \* 171 g/km



**India**  
**Maruti Suzuki Alto 800 (petrol)**  
FUEL ECONOMY \* 23.2 kmpl  
EMISSIONS \* 103 g/km

Prices of petrol and diesel in Delhi on September 1



## FORD FIGO



## TOYOTA COROLLA ALTIS



Model	Petrol	Diesel
Ex-showroom price (Rs)	550,000	639,500
Real world FE (kmpl)	13.6	15.1
Fuel cost (Rs)	61.20	44.45
Cost per km (Rs)	4.5	2.94
Saving per km (Rs)		1.56
Price differential (Rs)		89,500
No. of km to save price difference		57,371
Minimum km per month		1,593 km

Model	Petrol	Diesel
Ex-showroom price (Rs)	1,622,324	1,754,324
Real world FE (kmpl)	10.1	16.9
Fuel cost (Rs)	61.20	44.45
Cost per km (Rs)	6.05	2.63
Saving per km (Rs)		3.42
Price differential (Rs)		132,000
No. of km to save price difference		38,596
Minimum km per month		1,072 km

## HYUNDAI VERNA



## SKODA SUPERB



Model	Petrol	Diesel
Ex-showroom price (Rs)	1,011,790	1,151,739
Real world FE (kmpl)	12.9	15.6
Fuel cost (Rs)	61.20	44.45
Cost per km (Rs)	4.74	2.84
Saving per km (Rs)		1.9
Price differential (Rs)		139,949
No. of km to save price difference		73,657
Minimum km per month		2,046 km

Model	Petrol	Diesel
Ex-showroom price (Rs)	2,330,000	2,625,000
Real world FE (kmpl)	10.9	11.6
Fuel cost (Rs)	61.20	44.45
Cost per km (Rs)	5.61	3.83
Saving per km (Rs)		1.78
Price differential (Rs)		295,000
No. of km to save price difference		165,730
Minimum km per month		4,603 km

such as the Toyota Corolla Altis, the switchover mileage per month is just 1,072 km, in the case of others such as the Skoda Superb, it can be as high as 4,603 km per month. The figure is so low in the case of Toyota because the diesel engine is much smaller and has much higher fuel efficiency than the petrol-engined car. In the case of the Superb, the diesel engine is in fact larger than the petrol engine and does not enjoy the fuel efficiency advantage.

It goes without saying that in the case of the Corolla Altis, if you make the switch you will be losing out on performance. But it's a very different case with the Hyundai Verna. Although both the diesel and petrol engines have a similar displacement and similar power, the diesel engine is still more fuel efficient even if not to the extent as the Corolla Altis diesel. Therefore the switchover mileage is much higher at 2,064 km per month for three years.

### THE INDIAN CONTEXT

In India, Maruti-Suzuki is the undisputed king when it comes to personal transport, a fact reflected in their sales figures. We see the company clinching the top spots, with its compact sedan, the Swift Dzire, having recently overtaken their small hatchback the Alto. The Hyundai i20 proves that Indians have in fact come around to accepting premium hatchbacks.



**Maruti Suzuki Swift Dzire**  
Units sold in June 2015 **22,866**



**Maruti Suzuki Alto**  
Units sold in June 2015 **21,115**



**Maruti-Suzuki Swift**  
Units sold in June 2015 **17,313**

While we are making it sound very simple right now, there are other factors at play. Diesel cars are usually more expensive to maintain and repair, while there is also a cost that you will pay extra if you are going to buy a diesel variant.

Or if you are going to take a loan to buy the car, then to buy a diesel variant there would be an increased EMI, which may or may not be as much as you would be paying extra for running the car on petrol.

And then, there is also the comfort factor. Would you rather drive the noiseless and totally vibration free petrol-engined car or the slightly noisier diesel? Even though diesels are much quieter than before, and the high-end cars are well insulated, low-end cars can still be noisy. And finally, do you love bottom-end grunt or top-end performance? That's another choice that you will be making. As they say, the devil lies in the details.





(FROM LEFT) FAMILY MEMBERS OF LT KIRAN SHEKHAWAT, BIBI SANDEEP KAUR, DR PRACHI PAWAR, NANDINI HARINATH, NIRMALA SITHARAMAN, IRA SIN

# A WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER OV

By Prachi Bhuchar  
and Shelly Anand

What do you get when you put a stand-up comic, a transgender who doesn't care two hoots about being politically correct and a minister who says snarky things with such eloquence that you'd get it only if you were really paying attention? The India Today Woman Summit & Awards 2015 was all about having a laugh, lavishing attention on yourself, living in the moment and leaving with a head full of stories that give voice to the way women are today engaging with the world around them.

The day-long event celebrated women who dream big, take on gender bias and are changing the social dynamics, despite being pitted against adversity.

Maneka Gandhi, minister for women and child development, set the tone for the day as she opened the summit. The minister, who is responsible for the #100Women initiative on Facebook that calls on you to nominate ordinary women who have made a difference, was quick to highlight the differences between an urban woman politician and one from a village. "These women choose to let their husbands do their work and take charge instead of learning the laws and duties of a panchayat leader. We need

to support these women sarpanches with education and teach them how to implement laws, get money from the government and run their village with confidence," she said.

## RECLAIMING YOUR IDENTITY

And the need for women to reclaim their space in society and be confident about their identities was a recurring theme at the summit. There was the disarming and quiet confidence exuded by Manabi Bandopadhyay, India's first transgender principal. Dressed in a Kanjivaram sari and sneakers, she exemplified the need to own your identity in today's world. She was born as a male and it was years before she had

# TODAY SUMMIT & AWARDS



IRA SINGHAL, APURVI CHANDELA, JUHI CHATURVEDI, ADITI RAO HYDARI AND HEMALATHA ANNAMALAI

## INDIA TODAY WOMAN AWARDS

- **INDIA TODAY WOMAN AS STORYTELLER**  
**Juhi Chaturvedi**, screenwriter
- **INDIA TODAY WOMAN IN SCIENCE**  
**Nandini Harinath**, physicist, deputy operations director of the Mars Orbiter Mission
- **INDIA TODAY WOMAN IN SPORT**  
**Apurvi Chandel**, shooter
- **INDIA TODAY CORPORATE WOMAN**  
**Hemalatha Annamalai**, founder and CEO, Ampere Vehicles
- **INDIA TODAY WOMAN INNOVATOR**  
**Dr Prachi Pawar**, president, Neelvasant Medical Foundation and Research Centre
- **INDIA TODAY INSPIRATIONAL WOMAN**  
**Bibi Sandeep Kaur**, mother of 80 adopted daughters
- **INDIA TODAY WOMAN OF STYLE**  
**Aditi Rao Hydari**, actor
- **INDIA TODAY WOMAN OF THE YEAR**  
**Ira Singhal**, 2014 UPSC topper
- **INDIA TODAY WOMAN BRAVEHEART**  
**Lt Kiran Shekhawat** (posthumously)

**ER** The India Today Woman Summit brought people from all walks of life under one roof to share inspiring tales of grit, courage and passion

the courage to undergo a sex change. She recounted the horror and loneliness of living in a society where gender roles are assigned from birth and aberrations are frowned upon.

Like her, issues of identity and pre-assigned roles, dealing with loneliness, and eventual triumph were explored and echoed by other speakers as well. Juhi Chaturvedi is a master storyteller and her film scripts (*Vicky Donor* and *Piku*) draw on real-life experiences, relationships and emotions that we all regularly grapple with. Growing up with a constantly ailing parent, she relates with children who have to take on responsibilities at a young age and give up the liberties that come

with a so-called normal childhood. There were moments when her battle with loneliness came through but as she explained, her writing helps her reconnect with a world where there is always hope.

### POWER OF THE MIND

The other recurrent theme throughout the summit was the power of the mind and a woman's ability to overcome all adversity. "The human body has an amazing way of shutting down all systems and focusing on what is important, at the time of a physical emergency," said Dilshad Master, an adventure enthusiast and television personality who fought breast cancer

and an accident to embrace life full on. Ira Singhal, who is differently-abled and topped the UPSC exam in 2014, said, "Almost all girls at some point or the other have been told they can't do something." Bibi Sandeep Kaur, a woman who lives in Amritsar with her 80 adopted daughters, was also part of this session. She said, "I'm fighting a battle every day, trying to convince parents who want to abandon or abort their little girls."

These stories of triumph were a revelation and celebrated women who battle stereotypes on a daily basis. Those such as the simple but sharp Nandini Harinath, deputy director of operations, Mars Mission, who literally





**"Expectation from sons and daughters must be same."**

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN**  
MoS (independent charge) for  
Commerce and Industry

**"I am who I am because of my mother. The home-makers keep everybody together."**

**MANEKA GANDHI**  
Minister for Women and  
Child Development



**"While I'm not propagating deceit, women need to be smart when getting married and not get blinded by love."**

**MRUNALINI DESHMUKH**  
Lawyer



**"A decade ago the surrogacy contract was simple. Now, it is almost 60 pages long. Yet there are lots of lacunae in the system."**

**DR FIRUZA PARIKH**  
Assisted reproduction specialist



**"When I had my sex change operation, friends and family moved away. However, just as pond scum settles once the ripple is gone, they made their peace with who I am."**

**MANABI BANDOPADHYAY**  
India's first transgender principal



manned the orbiter from her seat at ISRO, were lauded for their contribution to society. Harinath revealed that even though she was never the subject of discrimination at ISRO, there were fewer women scientists in India, given the cultural stereotype.

Much like Harinath, stand-up comedian Aditi Mittal was all about breaking the glass ceiling and debunking stereotypes. Mittal hates being called a female comedian, "Female is not a genre. What I perform is not 'female' humour, it is observational."

## URBAN ANGST

The stereotypes were not just restricted to professions. Urban angst—made up of issues of weight loss, failed reproduction, bad marriages and divorces—was debated at length at the summit. When psychologist Varkha Chulani, nutritionist Rujuta Diwekar and actor Bhumi Pednekar got together to talk about weight, the focus was on whether thin is indeed beautiful and about how self-image issues begin early, with youngsters being sent mixed messages by their families who want them to conform and look good (read thin).

Meanwhile, assisted reproduction specialist Dr Firdausi Qadri once again touched on the theme of urban loneliness, stress and how a lot of women who are choosing to have babies late are now turning to surrogacy for help. While many in the audience felt surrogacy 'meddled with nature',

Dr Parikh said, "It helps surrogate mothers who mostly come from underprivileged backgrounds."

Other burning issues such as the economics of marriage or rather divorce, were discussed by divorce lawyer Mrunalini Deshmukh who explained how women today needed to be aware of their rights to make the right decision. She said, mothers need to raise their daughters to be self-reliant and how it is fine to think of moving on and being compensated for it.

As it began, the day also ended with a woman politician who emphasised the fact that change should begin from home. The chief guest for the evening, Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State, commerce and industry, closed the summit and gave away the awards. In her address, she said, "There is a need to change mindsets at home. Our expectations from sons and daughters need not be different. They both need to have a sense of responsibility; why only ask the daughter about her whereabouts?"

The day concluded with the India Today Woman Awards 2015 which recognised nine women achievers. It was an emotional moment as the parents and husband of Lt Kiran Shekhawat, India's first woman officer to die in the line of duty, accepted the award on her behalf. A fitting tribute and a day to celebrate the agony and ecstasy of being a woman.

Follow the writers on Twitter  
@prachibhuchar and @anand\_shelly

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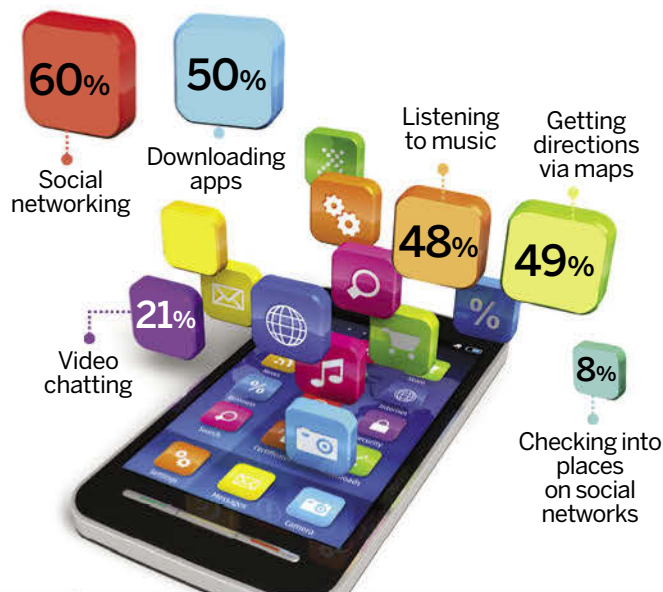
**business today**  
FOR MANAGING TOMORROW



Graphic by GAURAV KUMRA

# SMART MOVES

Here's a list of other things people do on their smartphones besides emailing



Source: brandwatch  
Last updated: May 2015

## viral video



A video of a dog begging his owner for forgiveness has touched more than 30 million.



Stevie Wonder singing his own songs with comedian James Corden in a car impressed 6 million.



Two million netizens watched arm wrestler Devon Larratt beating Hafthor Bjornsson, the actor who played the Mountain in *Game of Thrones*.

## web win

### Tweeple Extend a Helping Hand

Sub-inspector Pradeep Kumar broke 65-year-old typist Krishna Kumar's typewriter while he was evicting vendors from Lucknow's streets. For years, Krishna Kumar has been sitting outside the GPO, earning a mere Rs 50 daily by typing on his Hindi typewriter. As pictures of a distraught Krishna Kumar surfaced online, tweeple rallied around the old man, forcing the UP government into action. The sub-inspector has been suspended and Krishna Kumar has been gifted two new typewriters.



## net fail

### An Uncharitable Act



NGO Goonj, a foundation that works for the development of rural areas, slums and undertakes disaster relief operations, has recently shared pictures of items that it has received as donation—from dirty utensils, rotten food to blood-stained clothes. The disgusting items have left netizens across the country shocked.

## web lol

### Unfriended Publicly



A Facebook post by Asif Raza Rana, a 22-year-old Pakistani, where he publicly severs his friendship with Mudasar and announces that Salman is his new best friend has been shared more than 6,000 times. The graphic post where he calls Mudasar 'selfish' and 'proud' has made netizens wonder about the reaction of the ex-best friend.

## internet star of the week

### Sandwich Saga



A video of YouTube star Andy George making a sandwich from scratch—growing his own vegetables, grinding flour, milking a cow for cheese and killing a chicken for the meat—over a period of six months, is trending online. The effort, which cost George \$1,500, has been criticised by some netizens who say the scene where he kills a chicken is too graphic.

## pixel perfect

### Her Own Photographer



Liisa Lutts, a photographer from Estonia, decided to click her own wedding pictures. Lutts took pictures of the treasured moments and posted them on her website, which have been shared on various social networks. And she didn't use a single selfie stick.

## what's new App Alert

**Instadict** gives you the definitions of difficult words as you're reading them on your phone.



**Mastery** motivates you to accomplish different skills through tutorials.



Follow the writer on Twitter @lkummi



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# THE BOOK WHISPERER

In her eighth work, bestselling author Elizabeth Gilbert dwells on writing as an act of catharsis. And it is every bit a spiritual epiphany as *Eat, Pray, Love*.

By Gayatri Jayaraman

If the first seven books were questions, her eighth is an answer. Best-selling author Elizabeth Gilbert, 46, speaks with a smile in her voice, as though she knows the solution is just around the corner, both in the work and on the telephone from New Jersey in the US. This one is not an unwitting self-help book in the way that her best-known one, *Eat, Pray, Love*, happened to help people find themselves, or in the way that *Committed: A Love Story*, her memoirs, was her personal quest for reasons for marriage, and in doing so, turned into a guide for others involved in the same seeking. This is very much a 'witting' self-help book, she says, a wisdom she's proud and unashamed to own and impart with some authority.

The book, essentially a chapter-wise demolition of the excuses you would use not to put your creativity to good use, and one that kicks so close to home that you will find yourself often wondering how she knew, is more than mere writerly advice. It assigns writing a spiritual purpose and bent. Almost Eckhart Tolle-like in its elevation of spirit, it treats ideas as sentient beings with the choice of whom they seek out to manifest. "If you don't have a sense of the sacredness about what you are about to create, there is literally no reason to keep going. The only reason why you should put the most precious treasure that you have, all your effort and passion and time and energy, into a work that nobody wants and nobody needs, and which you may in all probability get nothing out of, because if it does get out into the world, it will probably be misunderstood, is because it feels divinely inspired to you."

Clearly influenced by a larger eastern outlook, if not an outright Indian one, Gilbert's book examines the nature and origin of genius, as something that a writer *has*, as opposed to something a



**Big Magic:**  
Creative Living  
Beyond Fear  
by Elizabeth Gilbert  
Bloomsbury  
Pages 276 pages



ELIZABETH  
GILBERT

## GILBERT'S 6 STEPS TO CREATING 'BIG MAGIC'

- 1 COURAGE**  
Have the courage to be afraid. "You don't get any special credit for knowing how to be afraid of the unknown."
- 2 ENCHANTMENT**  
Feel mystified enough by your genius to allow it to do its work. "It will come and go and you must let it come and go."
- 3 PERMISSION**  
You don't need anyone's permission to create. "Creative entitlement means believing that you are allowed to be here."
- 4 PERSISTENCE**  
Everyone struggles. Stop waiting for your environment. Be a trickster—adapt. "Perfectionism is just a high-end, haute couture version of fear."

writer *is being*. This distance from genius, skill, talent, and creativity is an important distinction, prevalent in ancient civilisations, she points out, that modernity has seemingly lost, and in doing so, has also lost power over. “The West and, specifically, parts of America, over the past 15 years has woken up to a more self-aware approach. People are now more willing and open to the idea of consciousness.” Between America and England, though, America carries more of an entitlement to calling oneself an artist, and the confidence of ‘hell yeah I’m an artist’ makes you more open to the genesis of the state of being, she says, but even so, pegs sparks of creativity as beyond culture, creativity being part of the human soul, cave paintings and music predating agriculture, economy and trade. Our nature, thus, argues Gilbert, is to primarily create for the joy of creating.

**Y**ou might think that’s easier said than done, but Gilbert herself has been no stranger to struggle, working as a waitress, bartender, au pair, ranch hand, cook, teacher, flea marketer and a bookstore clerk as she wrote. She recommends not placing the burden of paying your bills on your creativity. Even as you make a pact not to burden it, vow the reverse too—don’t let it burden you either.

Through the book, Gilbert is performing a larger function than encouraging a young writer to find his or her voice. Indeed, she wishes, as a writer, not a reader, that Harper Lee would have spent much more of her life uninhibitedly writing irrespective of if anyone would have loved what she had to say. She is in effect unshackling the industry of writing itself from those who would own it in cliques and with an elitism that makes other writers believe they are less capable, less

deserving. “Someone asked me if I was not merely encouraging young people to add more to the garbage heap. And I was like ‘how arrogant’. Who am I to judge what talent is worthy?” It comes from an upbringing that was never fancy, and that focused on the need to create and not make a big deal about it, she explains. The weeding out, Gilbert says, will be done by opportunity, destiny, and the market. There is no need for writers to do that for themselves. It’s silly to pull a blanket over one’s head and stop making a thing that makes us internally vibrant, because someone was going to be mean to us. As women, she explains, we also have even less of a right for the sake of all those in history who would have killed to have this present day freedom of voice, to stay silent. She pulls the act of creation out of the hands of its niche owners, and throws it open to the winds, for it to germinate where it finds willing soil.

Like all her works, *Big Magic* carries a Gilbert signature of pragmatic vulnerability, paradoxical as that may seem. “Weakness and practicality are all interlinked. You don’t need to stop being afraid, you just need to find the courage to be vulnerable,” she explains. E.L. James got bashed online a few months ago and it’s Jonathan Franzen’s turn now. No matter what you create, chances are, in the social-media-instant-censure age, you are going to get bashed. “I can’t say it doesn’t affect me, because it does. I just won’t put my hand up and go in search of my own destruction because I’ve seen people sit with a gallon of ice cream at 2 a.m. and search till they find that broken glass to bite on. There’s enough suffering that comes your way accidentally, don’t go in search of it.” Feeding the positive, asking ‘OK... What next?’ should always lead you to an act of creation because when it is self-fulfilling, it is also self-perpetuating.

There is no artifice, or twinge of arrogance, not even when Gilbert speaks of her own genius, because she is, equally, speaking about yours and your right to yours. This is a wise and witty voice that refuses to take itself so seriously that it cannot learn, or create, from its hard-earned authority, or even fail. You have a voice you enjoy, now own it, because life is short and creating is wondrous, she’s saying. Gilbert should know. ■

## 5 TRUST

Reject artistic martyrdom. “Why would your creativity not love you? It came to you, didn’t it?... Creativity wanted a relationship with you.”

## 6 DIVINITY

When you acquire a sense of the divine, all work becomes imbued with it. “The lines blur between high and low, between light and heavy, between right and wrong.”

## NEW RELEASES



### THE NEW THREAT FROM ISLAMIC MILITANCY

by Jason Burke  
Random House  
Pages 288  
Price Rs 599

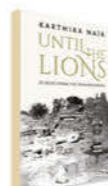
► Journalist and author Jason Burke who has long documented the rise of al Qaeda describes how swiftly the VHS-era terror group has been swiftly eclipsed by ISIL with its new brutal ideology and self-radicalised jihadis with YouTube-read atrocities.



### THE STRENGTH TO SAY NO

by Rekha Kalindi with Mouhssine Ennaimi  
Penguin  
Pages 156  
Price Rs 299

► Translated into English from Mouhssine Ennaimi’s acclaimed French edition, it’s an inspiring book on the life of an 11-year-old who stood up against parental pressure for child marriage, and then actively advocated for girls’ education in her West Bengal village. Now 18, she’s being billed as the Indian Malala. But even as just Rekha, her story deserves to be read.



### UNTIL THE LIONS: ECHOES FROM THE MAHABHARATA

by Karthika Nair  
HarperCollins  
Pages 263  
Price Rs 799

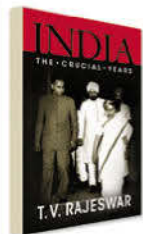
► Anyone who thinks they know their Mahabharata, think again. Karthika Nair’s astounding poems tell the epic story through the minor female characters, from Gandhari to Hidimbi, Ganga to Kunti.



# GHOSTS OF ACTIONS PAST

A super spy's account allows us a window into the mistakes politicians make

By Kaveree Bamzai



**India: The Crucial Years**  
by T.V. Rajeswar  
HarperCollins  
Publishers  
Pages 283  
Price Rs 599

Politicians create monsters for short-term gains and then successive generations have to pay the price. Nothing illustrates this better than T.V. Rajeswar's new book, *India: The Crucial Years*. The former director, Intelligence Bureau, close to Indira Gandhi, was part of the most tumultuous events in recent Indian history. And he explains exactly why they became so—Indira Gandhi was told of the excesses by Sanjay Gandhi during the Emergency, but did nothing. Rivalry between then Punjab chief minister Darbara Singh and then Union home minister Giani Zail Singh created Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. It was brought to the then prime minister's attention,

but she chose to ignore it. Rajiv Gandhi's unfettered powers to Arun Singh and General K. Sundarji, he believes, allowed the build-up of Operation Brasstacks in the West and Operation Chequerboard on the Indo-Tibetan border, which the Pakistanis promptly used to obtain advanced weapons from the US. It also allowed Zia-ul-Haq to draw up his grand plan of ISI-mounted covert operations bordering on a low-key proxy war, from which neither Kashmir nor India has recovered.

Rajeswar, who joined the Indian Police Service in 1949 and served as Governor of Sikkim, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh after retirement, makes startling revelations. Chief among them is that RSS chief Balasaheb Deoras established a link with the PM's house and was appreciative of Sanjay Gandhi's disciplinarian approach during the Emergency, particularly his concerted drive to enforce family planning among Muslims. Deoras was keen to meet mother and son, but this was not possible as Indira Gandhi did not want to be dubbed an RSS sympathiser.

Politicians were different then, more gentlemanly perhaps. Tamil Nadu chief minister M.G. Ramachandran handed over the controversial chapter about Indira Gandhi's sex life in M.O. Mathai's book to Rajeswar, asking him to give it to the prime minister. West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu was unhappy about not being informed of Rajeswar's appointment as Governor but they developed a good rapport, sharing a couple of drinks at least once a month. And although Basu had

a great relationship with the mother, the warmth didn't extend to Rajiv Gandhi.

There's been a surfeit of political memoirs recently which has thrown up the question—do these breach the Official Secrets Act. Perhaps, but they also perform a public service, offering valuable insights into how a government functions. The quick decisions, the compromises, the tough calls. As a civil servant, Rajeswar often had to do what the government of the day expected of him, whether it was to track down George Fernandes during the Emergency or to ease out officers from the IB who had investigated Indira Gandhi a tad too zealously once she was out of power. He writes of it in a matter of fact way.

Much as former R&AW chief A.S. Dulat's book gave readers an inside view of Kashmir, Rajeswar's memoir allows us to enter the shadowy world of the Intelligence Bureau. Rajeswar makes a strong case for IB, including writing that they repeatedly told Indira Gandhi to release political prisoners and call for elections during the Emergency, and he insists if she had done so in the first year itself, history would have been different. He also writes of the extent of surveillance of diplomats, bureaucrats, journalists, and politicians, from whom they met for a drink to where they did so—even if it is often worded delicately. "V.C. Shukla was very close to some film producers in Mumbai," he writes of the late politician who played a key role during the Emergency, and they would "stop at nothing to humour him. His overnight trips to Mumbai attracted the attention of Mrs Gandhi who had a discreet enquiry made".

There are enough cloak and dagger bits to thrill the spytrackers—Israeli foreign minister Moshe Dayan being met secretly by Morarji Desai and Atal Bihari Vajpayee in

1978 at a time when relations with Israel were in cold storage; Rajeswar's work with Bangladesh's liberator Mujibur Rahman, and his advice to him, unheeded, that he move out of his ancestral home to the state guest house and the latter saying no because it was used by Yahya Khan for orgies; and Yasser Arafat walking into the Non-Aligned Movement meeting in Delhi in 1983 with his revolver in his holster, because who could tell him otherwise?

Now 89, Rajeswar, who lives in Delhi, is one of the last survivors of the Emergency era. This book should be read by all those who foolishly clamp down on dissent and think it will have no consequences.

Follow the writer on Twitter @kavereeb



MANEESH AGNIHOTRI

# THE LAST EMPEROR

JAGMOHAN DALMIYA CHANGED WORLD CRICKET  
FOREVER—FOR BETTER, AND FOR WORSE

By Kunal Pradhan

It was November, 1991. Autumn was slowly turning into winter. India was breaking its chains and filling its lungs with the revitalising air of liberalisation. Over in South Africa, cricket was being readmitted into the international arena after a two-decade anti-apartheid ban. It was in this setting that Ali Bacher, former Test player and prime mover of the South African cricket board, called Jagmohan Dalmiya, a Marwari businessman from Calcutta who had been the Indian board secretary for just over a year. South Africa were to tour India for a three-match one-day series the following week that would mark the country's first international tour in 22 years. Bacher wanted to know how the matches could be telecast live in South Africa. It was a difficult question. The BCCI, which ran as a small non-profit until then, didn't even know who the telecast rights belonged to—the government or the board. After a series of clarifications and initial discussions, the BCCI estimated that the series could perhaps be sold for \$10,000 per match. But when Bacher called back to offer twice as much—\$60,000 for series—the money-spinner in Dalmiya first kicked in. Knowing how badly South Africa wanted the series, he closed the deal for \$120,000. On November 14, during the final ODI at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Bacher handed a cheque to the BCCI—the first time the Indian board was paid for a series for a foreign broadcast. It was a transaction that would change Indian cricket forever, and open a world of opportunities for Dalmiya, transforming him from a builder for whom cricket administration was a hobby to one of the world's most dominant sports officials.

Dalmiya, 75, who passed away on September 20, 2015, had qualities that represented both the best and the worst of Indian cricket over the last three decades. Under him, the sport in this country spread its wings, going beyond performances on the field to emerge as cricket's only genuine centre of influence. Also under him, however, the BCCI changed from a promoter to a corporate behemoth with all the lure and trappings of power.

In his heyday, Dalmiya was seen as a physical manifestation of everything that was wrong with Indian cricket—lack of transparency, honorary office-bearers, and a

tyranny of favours that kept the flock together. But apart from his alleged Machiavellian traits, Dalmiya never forgot what cricket should be about. As BCCI secretary, as the ICC's first Asian president, and as the Indian board president, he firmly backed his players, often against all odds. In 2001, when match-referee Mike Denness accused Sachin Tendulkar of ball tampering, Dalmiya's dissent single-handedly held world cricket to ransom, creating a scenario where the sport could even have been split in two. That incident, and the ICC's eventual buckling under pressure, was ultimate proof that India, and not England and Australia, now called the shots.

Dalmiya also believed that cricket was too limited, and would be eradicated if it did not open its gates to other countries. His push for globalisation worked in two ways—along with a push to spread the game to hitherto untouched parts of Africa, Asia and the Americas, it increased the ICC vote bank to ensure that newer members, who owed allegiance to India, would always stand behind him.

But Dalmiya, like all tragic heroes, had one fatal flaw. The size of the BCCI kitty became so large under his watch that he didn't even realise when politicians, industrialists and careerists with no genuine links to the game crawled out of the woodwork for pieces of the pie. Eventually, in 2006, the pie itself was suddenly snatched away. Dalmiya's faction lost the BCCI elections; he was dismissed, demonised, and even sent to jail for alleged financial malpractice. Only to make one glorious return in 2015, again as president, after the factions that followed him had consumed both themselves, and the romance of cricket as we knew it.

Dalmiya may have been many things. But, above all, he was the last of cricket's illustrious administrators. A man who cared about the sport a little more than he cared about either money or power. He saw himself as a patriarch, a bit like the Maharaja of Patiala and the Maharajkumar of Vizianagram, or later Madhavrao Scindia and Raj Singh Dungarpur, once did. He wasn't a lord like them. He was simply *Jagguda*; a former wicket-keeper on the Calcutta maidans who would one day change cricket forever—for better, and for worse. ■

JAGMOHAN DALMIYA  
1940-2015



QAMAR SIBTAIN



# THE UNTOLD SABAVALA

Jehangir's Sabavala's bequest of his own and collected works to The Museum in Mumbai is one of the largest private donations ever made by an artist

By Gayatri Jayaraman

The gentleman-like, towering Jehangir Sabavala (1922-2011) was not one of India's best loved Moderns. Throughout his career, he stood apart from his peers. Though he was a favourite of the Tata clan of collectors, along with B. Prabha, Sabavala and M.F. Husain shared a lifelong rivalry that bled into the Progressive art circuit. In an interview to Pritish Nandy, Husain, while picking contemporary artist Ganesh Pyne as one of the finest painters of his time, picked Sabavala to head a list of India's worst painters.

It stemmed from how different Sabavala's work was. The women he painted were preternaturally antithetical to the coarse, buxom, lustful women of K.H. Ara, F.N. Souza or even the passion-lined lilting figures of Husain. He broke them into dispassionate, almost sexless wedges, elevated in time, space with a calming, rather than an excitable colour palette. Where the Progressives broke ground, Sabavala, it was said, broke out the bone china. He simply did not fit into the movements of his time, yet, by no means was he an artist you could ignore. His 'Vespers I', which broke records when it sold for Rs 2.16 crore in the London Bonhams auction in 2012, today hangs in the private chamber of Yusuf Hamied, chairman of Cipla. Prices of Sabavala's art work are up today, his 'Flight Into Egypt-I' broke his previous record at Rs 3 crore in a Saffronart sale in late 2014, and a renewed interest in this Indian cubist was noticed. There is clearly more to be known of him than the popular narrative suggests.

So, when you walk into the Jehangir Nicholson Gallery of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya or The Museum in Mumbai, where curator Ranjit Hoskote, also his official biographer, is unpacking the bequest of Sabavala's works, made by his family to the museum—the largest such donation of its kind by an artist to any public institution in India—and you see the graceful curves of a woman playing a sitar in a K.K. Hebbar work. It's a part of Sabavala's personal collection, a work so deeply different from anything you would associate with him, you understand that the artist picked his influences carefully from a composite they said he never had. As they unpack his tools, knives, spatulas, brushes and a finicky handmade palette crafted from fibreglass so that the colours wouldn't run into each



SABAVALA'S  
WOMEN WERE  
PRETERNATURALLY  
ANTITHETICAL TO  
THE PASSION-LINED  
LILTING FIGURES  
OF M.F. HUSAIN.



SABAVALA'S BEQUEST BEING UNPACKED AT THE JE HANGIR NICHOLSON GALLERY IN MUMBAI; (LEFT) ONE OF HIS PAINTINGS

other without his bidding, his meticulousness, which Anupam Sah, head of conservation at The Museum, refers to as his obsessive neatness, comes to fore. In the recreating of his erstwhile studio at The Museum, the more to the man than the clipped accent beneath his moustache-filtered whispers, unravels.

The 'essay', as Hoskote prefers to call this exhibit, is a five-fold biography of the artist. It pulls the time parameter to judge him back to not just his own preserved six student canvases, portraits done at the JJ School of Art between 1945 and 1947, but further down to works inherited or bought by him. A 17th century Lokeswara and Safavid Isfahan frescoes by Sarkis Katchadourian, a work by Japanese artist Kunisada Utawaga and by M.M. Kaye, author of *The Far Pavilions*.



Photographs by MANDAR DEODHAR

Filmmaker Arun Khopkar, who made the only movie on Sabavala's life, *Colours of Absence* in 1993, calls him a much misunderstood artist. He knew the Upanishads, he made copious notes of light and hue and its impact on the tones of nature, and of course, his love of beautiful things, of clothes and well-manicured fingers. Hoskote says he returned to India from Europe to be a part of the post-Independence movements of the country, and although portrayed as being overtly European, knew the country, rural India, the farm at Gholwad, where he often escaped on weekends, more intimately than most. "His older works, so meticulously preserved by him, also indicate that he was subconsciously deeply influenced by his time and learning in India." He was affected by

the criticism, open to self-evaluation, halting mid-career to be influenced by the works of German expressionist and caricaturist Lyonel Feininger, which introduced a luminosity to his tones. "There are painters you look at and there are painters you live with. Sabavala was the latter. Parts of his work grew on you differently at different times of the day," Khopkar adds.

But Nandy believes history has a way of using auction prices to re-evaluate mediocre painters into those of value. "The values of painters are no longer determined by the excellence of their work but by the ingenuity of their galleries," he says.

Be that as it may, economy deciding which artists gets lifted from the annals of obscurity—The Museum is in fact dusting out works of Sabavala

from its reserve collection which have not been seen in 30 years—the trajectory drawn on the walls of the Jehangir Nicholson Gallery, from childhood to his last six works, the last of which is detailed in his by then cancer-ridden hand with 'pink' and 'brown' in the unfinished spaces, narrate a spellbinding story of a gentle growth and a conscious movement towards a specific style. It was as if Sabavala, who consciously annotated his works and spoke often of the legacy of the bequest, planning its minutest detail well in advance of his passing, wanted to tell the story himself.

The artist's narrative is only told comprehensively in hindsight. From behind his bequest, the quiet-throughout-his-lifetime Sabavala now speaks.

Follow the writer on Twitter @Gayatri\_J



**WORD  
POWER**

New words to power up your English with

**AWESOMESAUCE**

Something is truly excellent and you need a powerful word to express that, go for this one.



**BRAIN FART**

When you have a temporary mental lapse and are unable to reason correctly.



**HANGRY**

Mix hungry with angry, and get this new word meaning bad-tempered or irritable as a result of hunger.

**MANSREADING**

The practice whereby a man, especially one travelling on public transport, adopts a sitting position with his legs wide apart, in such a way as to encroach on an adjacent seat or seats.



# FAMOUS SPEECHES THAT T

WITH SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S SPEECH AT THE WORLD'S PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS IN 1893, AN ERA OF ELECTRIFYING ORATORY, IN CONTENT AS WELL AS IN FORM

**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA**

He introduced the West to Vedanta and yoga. Harvard University invited him to chair its philosophy department.

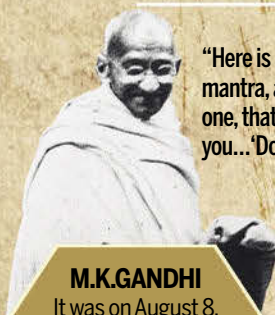
"I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance."



"Here is a mantra, a short one, that I give you... 'Do or Die.'"

**M.K.GANDHI**

It was on August 8, 1942, on the eve of the "Quit India" movement that the Father of the Nation gave his famous speech:



**SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE**

Uttered this famous line at a rally in Burma in 1944. It became an anthem for the youth.

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

The last speech of India's first Nobel laureate in Santiniketan, April 1941, after a spell of illness:

"Perhaps the dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises."



**BAL GANGADHAR TILAK**

He was imprisoned for 18 months for "inciting" the Chapekar brothers to kill two British officers. He came out in 1899 and coined the slogan:



"Freedom is my birthright. So long as it is awake within me, I am not old."

## ONE-LINE WONDERS

Some true, some exaggeration and some assumption



**261 BC: "What have I done"**

So lamented emperor **Ashoka**, as he stood amid corpses of thousands of soldiers killed in the battle of Kalinga.



**327 BC: "What a strange country India"**

**Alexander the Great** apparently told this to his general Seleucus Nicator, as the Greeks reached India.



**1325: "Hunuz Dilli dur ast"**

Delhi is still far away, wrote Sufi saint **Nizamuddin Auliya** when faced with threats from Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. The latter died on his way to Delhi.



# TOUCHED THE SOUL OF INDIA

MENT OF RELIGIONS IN CHICAGO IN SEPTEMBER 1893 STARTED  
LL AS IN STYLE, THE HALLMARK OF 21ST CENTURY INDIA

"Today I demand of you  
one thing, above all...  
Give me blood and I  
promise you freedom."



## SRI AUROBINDO

He wrote this message  
at the request of  
All India Radio for  
broadcast on the eve of  
India's Independence.

"The partition  
must go...  
unity must be  
achieved, for it  
is necessary for  
the greatness of  
India's future."



## SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

The comment was made  
when the Constituent  
Assembly of India met  
in the Constitution Hall  
on July 22, 1947.

"Times are  
hard... Our  
minds are  
haunted by  
myths... it  
depends on us  
under what ban-  
ner we fight..."



## JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

His electrifying 'Tryst  
with Destiny' speech,  
delivered on the eve  
of Independence,  
marked a new dawn.

"At the stroke  
of the midnight  
hour, when the  
world sleeps,  
India will awake to  
life and freedom."



## ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

At the UN General  
Assembly on September  
25, 2003, the then PM  
turned down Pakistan's  
offer for a Kashmir  
ceasefire.

"We totally refuse  
to let terrorism  
become a tool of  
blackmail... We  
shall not negotiate  
with terrorism."



## MEH

An expression of  
indifference or a lack  
of enthusiasm, popular-  
ised by the cartoon  
series *The Simpsons*.



## RAGE-QUIT

A verb, meaning to an-  
grily abandon an activ-  
ity or pursuit that has  
become frustrating.



## Mx

A gender-neutral  
honorific before some-  
body's name—just like  
Mr, Miss, Mrs, Ms.

## BEER O'CLOCK

A fun term for the  
'appropriate' time of the  
day one feels like having  
the first glass of beer.



## TENDERPRENEUR

The beneficiaries of  
corrupt government  
officials who abuse their  
power by influencing  
decisions about tenders  
of the government.

Source: *The Oxford  
English Dictionary 2015*

Graphic by PREM SINGH GIRI

tions. But we have all read them, heard them, loved them, used and reused them.



## 1757: "The turban thou must defend"

At the Battle of Plassey, **Siraj ud-  
Daulah** put his turban on the ground  
and said this to his commander Mir  
Jafar, who later betrayed him.



## 1799: 'I would rather live two days as a tiger than 200 years as a sheep'

**Tipu Sultan** is believed to have  
said this while defending the fort  
of Srirangapatna in Mysore.



## 1809: "Sab lal ho jayega"

Maharaja **Ranjit Singh's** presci-  
ent comment while looking at  
the map of the Indian sub-con-  
tinent with a large portion in red  
showing the British Empire.



ROHIT CHAWLA



## GOING PLACES

*Bahubali* is not the only film doing India proud in neighbouring China with a release scheduled at over 5,000 screens. Actress **Swara Bhaskar** is in the country representing the film, *Nil Bhattey Sanata*, which is the opening film at the Silk Road International Film Festival in Fuzhou. Directed by Ashwini Iyer Tiwari and written by her husband Nitesh Tiwari, who is currently in Ludhiana directing Aamir Khan in *Dangal*, the Agra-set film sees Swara as a single parent to a rebellious teenage daughter. After China, Swara will head to London for the BFI London Film Festival. Back home, audiences can see her as Salman Khan's sister in Diwali release *Prem Ratan Dhan Payo*.

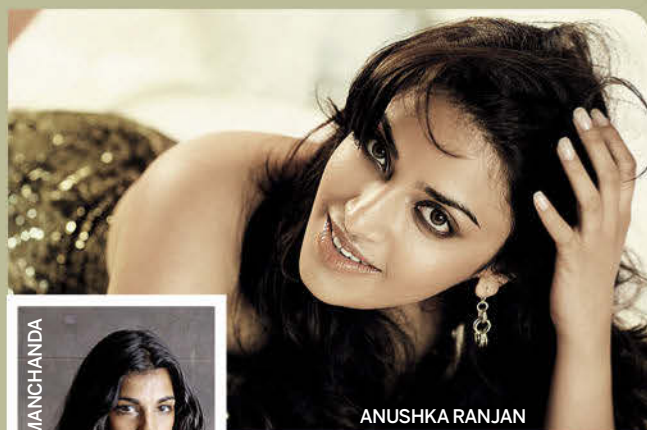
## A CUT ABOVE

Odisha girl **Anisha Acharya**, who holds a master's degree in editing from the American Film Institute (AFI), has started her filmmaking journey on a high. *Day One*, a thesis film made by AFI graduates has won the BAFTA US Student Award, the Student Emmy Award and the Annual Student Academy Awards, also known as the Student Oscar.



## BELLE DANCING

Singer, voiceover artist and theatre actor **Meher Mistry** is the new belle in town who will be crooning Broadway hits such as 'Home' and 'Belle' and dancing to Terence Lewis's choreography in Disney's production *Beauty and the Beast*. This isn't unfamiliar territory for Mistry who has struck high notes in stage musicals in the past. The production premieres in Mumbai in October.



## THE POWER OF TWO

Bollywood is set to welcome not one, but two Anushkas. **Anushka Ranjan**, better-known as a model and friend of actresses such as Alia Bhatt, Shraddha Kapoor and Sonakshi Sinha, is making her acting debut in renowned cinematographer Binod Pradhan's directorial debut *Wedding Pullav*. Meanwhile, singer **Anushka Manchanda**, who first made headlines with India's first all-female band Viva!, has debuted with *Angry Indian Goddesses* which is being promoted as "India's first female buddy comedy". Manchanda is in comfortable shoes essaying the role of Mad, a singer-songwriter who is in Goa to attend a friend's wedding.

■ Compiled by **Suhani Singh** Follow the writer on Twitter @suhani84



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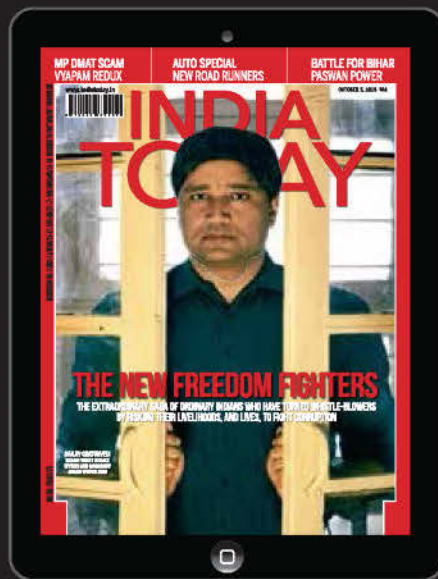




# INDIA TODAY

DIGITAL EDITION

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INDIA TODAY

OCTOBER 2015

# spice

WEDDING SPECIAL

RNI NO. DELENG / 2005 / 15332 \*Not for sale. To be circulated free with India Today in Mumbai, Delhi & NCR, Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Chandigarh. \*Supplement to India Today issue dated October 5, 2015\*.



## AN ODE TO LOVE

Sabyasachi Mukherjee's  
trousseau essentials

SABYASACHI MUKHERJEE, DESIGNER



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# INDIA TODAY **Spice**

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**Of course marriages aren't only about the wedding, but the multi-billion dollar wedding industry isn't only about inner poise either.** So when it comes to servicing the altar ego, even the crustiest of cynics wouldn't dare to blight the tread of generations. *Spice* salutes this colossus of tradition leaving no wedding wow unexplored. On this elaborate tripwire of excess, we invite couturiers and the finest wedding planners from across the globe to serve the spectacular on a platter.

With nuptial nuggets that soar as spirits and bloom as fantastical floral bouquets, *Spice* negotiates a febrile mix of colour, couture and convention where the riot of festivity is second only to the flood of choices. Superlatives embellish grandeur as the fabulous use of space is another recurrent favourite with drama as key.

Meandering through the cluster of poetic associations with colour, ceremony and emotions, wedding couturier Sabyasachi Mukherjee is our man of the hour. Where less is more and traditional deemed eternal, Mukherjee's design sensibility is a balancing act between exuberance and overkill; it's about finding the perfect mix of personality, clothes, jewellery, make-up and decor. Heirloom jewellery, traditional weaves and subtle individualism are the hallmarks of his trousseau essentials. Even though he concurs that this year belongs to red and gold, he is not opposed to innovators who dare to don ivory.

Veteran designer Anju Modi also celebrates the cause of the rebel as she makes the case for ivory, turquoise, yellow as well as pastels as choices for the contemporary bride. The elegance of convention marries well with contemporary weaves as lighter, elegant ensembles that celebrate new silhouettes and cuts are all the rage.

Settling down to connubial bliss is best left to the experts. *Spice* invites one of the world's premier wedding planners and designers, Sarah Haywood to summon her magic. Haywood was the go-to international commentator for the royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton. With style, glamour, sophistication, curated design and opulent inspiration as parameters, weddings are no longer just about champagne fountains but signature cocktails and mocktails on trend this year with colour and sensational ingredients from moon water with real gold, to drinks with chili and chocolate. From fabled pudding stations to fairytale endings, the sky is the limit when it comes to indulgent celebration.

Of course, when we are talking of the great wedding extravaganza, venues are the stage on which the drama unfolds. From magnificent palaces to the bohemian rhapsody of Caribbean islands, destination weddings are the fun and stylish alternative to cookie-cutter weddings according to Marcy Blum, author of the best selling 'Wedding Planning for Dummies'. While attention to detail and personalisation is key, Blum lists the top five ingredients that make a magical wedding, exclusively for *Spice*.

However, not all our pursuits overturn the accepted notions of institutional practice. For that perfect honeymoon, *Spice* recommends romancing solitude at one of the most beautiful, and expensive, resorts in Australia, the Emirates One & Only Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa.

After all, it is decadence that fires the incandescence in the celebration glow.

(Aroon Purie)



# CONTENTS

October 2015

## 12

### BRIDAL MARCH

FOR SABYASACHI MUKHERJEE,  
TRADITION NEVER GOES  
OUT OF FASHION



Photograph by MANDAR DEODHAR/[www.indiatodayimages.com](http://www.indiatodayimages.com)



#### ON THE COVER

Sabyasachi Mukherjee

COVER IMAGE  
ROHIT CHAWLA





# 22

## WEDDING WOWS

SARAH HAYWOOD SHOWS HOW  
TO GO BEYOND CHIFFON, ROSES  
AND A MULTI-TIERED CAKE

# 24

## SOUL MATE

PLUNGE INTO LUXURY AND  
GET CLEANSED BY NATURE



# 18

## TROUSSEAU ESSENTIALS

COUTURE TRENDS FOR THE  
CONTEMPORARY BRIDE





## 38

### TIME TO RETROSPECT

OMEGA AMBASSADOR CINDY  
CRAWFORD RUMINATES ON LIFE

## 32

### SPARKLE SAGA

THE GANJAM STORY  
UNFOLDS OVER 125 YEARS



## 30 PLANNER TALK

CUSTOMISE  
A FLAWLESS  
WEDDING DAY

### 01

LETTER FROM THE  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

### 06

HOTSHEET

### 42

LASTLOOK

# CONTRIBUTORS



**SARAH HAYWOOD**  
*Luxury wedding expert*

Sarah Haywood is internationally acknowledged as one of the world's premier wedding planners and designers; sought by leading public figures, princesses and pop stars. She is the UK's top-selling bridal author and was established as the go-to international commentator for the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton; has lectured across Europe, the Middle East, South Africa, the US, and Mexico on the art of her business; and is a leading name in luxury wedding and design.



**MARCY BLUM**  
*Wedding planner*

Marcy Blum has been creating wonderful, memorable, magical weddings and events for 27 years. In addition to her work as an "eventiste", she is also a sought-after speaker and consultant for hotels and other businesses in the wedding and special-event field. Aside from having contributed to many publications, the third edition of her best seller *Wedding Planning for Dummies*, was released this year. She has been a guest on Oprah, The Today Show, The Nate Berkus Show, and Good Day New York many among others.



**ANJU MODI**  
*Designer*

Anju Modi, one of the leading couturiers, has been working with master artisans to revive age-old Indian techniques, long forgotten. Her extensive travels through the country and research on India's textile traditions have been a constant inspiration behind each of her collections. She has received critical acclaim for designing costumes for the movie *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela*, and is currently working on the costumes for *Bajirao-Mastani* as well.



**SELVAPRAKASH**  
*Photographer*

An award-winning photographer, Selvaprakash started his career as a staff photographer for *Dinamalar*, a leading Tamil newspaper. In 2008, he won the India Press Photo Award. His works have been exhibited at the 2008 World photojournalism festival (ChinaTOPS), Singapore International Photo Festival 2008; Angkor Photo festival 2010 and Photovisa International Photo festival, Russia 2010.



# FUSION FAIRY TALE

*Compiled by Anindita Satpathi and Chumki Bharadwaj*



**Mandapam by Klove**

If love was a colour what would it be? We're going to skip boring ol' red and imagine amber or magenta or even an unlikely chartreuse. Dabbling in a colour palette that's glamorously eclectic, Klove by lighting designers Prateek Jain and Gautam Seth has designed a 'Mandapam' in association with Swarovski. The dome-shaped altar supported by artistically sinuous pillars melds contemporary design aesthetics with cherished traditional symbols of marriage. The dappled play of light juxtaposed against the sheer sparkle of crystals creates a tapestry of emotions. An artful arrangement of pendeloques, beads, octagons and pear drops branch into pearl-like luminous strands that create an effect of a half-opened jharoka. Imbued with the stirrings of anticipation, hope and commitment, it is love exemplified. The structure can be dismantled and customised with six variations of lighting. The limited edition piece is available on order.

Contact klove studio J2 Green Park main, New Delhi



**NO JEKYLL FOR THIS HIDE**

Paper can never get passé when you have document cases as gorgeous as Alfred Dunhill's Autumn Winter 2015 Bourdon collection. We adore the two-tone finishing on the bi-colour case, daring for a brand that specialises in sparse style. The functional silhouette makes it an interesting substitute for the stodgy briefcase. Made of top-of-the-line printed Italian calfskin, it has palladium plate finished hardware to boast of. The finer details are impeccable, topped with a vintage AD logo and palladium plate finished hardware.

**Price** \$1,220

**Availability** [www.dunhill.com](http://www.dunhill.com)



**WHISKY FOR WANDERERS**

A lofty quest, a rip-roaring adventure and the hunt for nirvana have one thing in common, the uncertainty and thrill of travel. Chivas 12's brand new addition to the 'Made for Gentlemen' series in collaboration with Globe Trotter is a cheeky reference to luggage tags and postcards. The hand-drawn limited edition gift tine designed by British illustrator Andrew Davidson pins must-visit cities in artful eloquence on a rich red base.

**Price** on request

**Availability** Duty free in Delhi and Mumbai

**SPEAKING FOR ITSELF**

Form meets functionality in this gorgeously lightweight wireless speaker, which stuns in the shape of a tantalisingly slim curved panel. The digital heartbreaker – Beoplay A6 – is the latest from the house of Bang & Olufsen to “maximise the spaciousness of sound” and look stunning while at it.

**Price** \$1,000

**Availability** Bang & Olufsen showroom



**SILVER STROKES**

The smoothly gliding motion of a fountain pen gives a rare sort of joy. Furnished with a stylish integrated nib, the Pilot Silver Sterling Panda pen is a covetable desk accessory. The exquisite Japanese-style paitningon the body keeps it trendy.

**Price** \$480

**Availability** [www.fahrneypens.com](http://www.fahrneypens.com)





# 5 BOUDOIR ESSENTIALS

BECAUSE A GREAT WARDROBE DOESN'T HAVE EVERYTHING A WOMAN NEEDS

**1 MCIII CHAMPAGNE**  
Moët & Chandon's brand new blend has strains of coffee, malt and hazelnut undercut by citrus-y intensity. It undergoes a three layer blending process for a period of ten years.  
**Price** ₹34,000  
**Buy from** [www.moet.com](http://www.moet.com)

**2 HERMÈS APPLE WATCH**  
In typical Hermès style, the Apple watch has been reworked into understated versions that are cutting-edge cool. The capucine leather strap on the Single Tour wraps twice around the wrist while giving a nod to the brand's equestrian heritage.  
**Price** starting from \$1,100  
**Buy from** [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)

**3 GODIVA DECADENCE HAMPER**  
To drive away those mid-autumn blues, what's better than a ton of chocolate? From truffles and designer biscuits to dark chocolate delights, this one's a keeper. There's a breakfast blend coffee powder too.  
**Price** ₹25,000  
**Buy from** [www.godiva.com.hk](http://www.godiva.com.hk)

**4 LILYTH 120 BY JIMMY CHOO**  
This cherry-red pair of peep-toes has Kate Hudson as its stylist. Sheathed in red velvet, satin and mirror leather with a zip detailing at the heel, it's cooly glamorous. You can't help loving the tulle detail.  
**Price** ₹52,160  
**Buy from** [www.jimmychoo.com](http://www.jimmychoo.com)

**5 TERRYFIC OUD EXTREME**  
From the marvellously luxurious collection of Terry de Gunzburg, the extrait that's caught our olfactory attention is a sensuous blend of oud and rose. It's opulently Oriental.  
**Price** €380  
**Buy from** [www.moncredo.pl](http://www.moncredo.pl)



## HOTSHEET

### MEN'S FASHION



#### YUM'S THE WORD

Everyday sophistication marries beautifully with fashionably formal for Ermenegildo Zegna's versatile collection. The YUM is a briefcase for young urban males (YUM). This briefcase is slim, light, soft, and offered in natural grained calf leather.

**Price** in request

**Availability** Ermenegildo Zegna stores across India

#### SHOE ME THE MAGIC

Put your best foot forward with these two-tone loafers in suede and calfskin from Canali. The tassels sure give it a novel twist with an air of nostalgia.

**Price** ₹48,000

**Availability** Canali boutique, DLF emporio, Delhi



#### DANDY COOL

Off the cuff fun always makes for dandy dressing, especially when it comes to men's accessories. These gold cycle cufflinks from Paul Smith adds a humorous touch to formal occasions.

**Price** ₹9,900

**Availability** Paul Smith stores in Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata & Bangalore



#### SIMPLY TRIPPIN'

With travel taking cues from lifestyle, luggage adopts functionality with a cheeky sense of adventure with Tumi's capsule collection (Mini by Tumi), designed in collaboration with the iconic Mini Cooper. The styles utilise the colours and prints signature to the Mini with black/volcanic orange racing stripe as in this carry-on.

**Price** ₹48,000

**Availability** Tumi stores in Mumbai, New Delhi and Bangalore





### HAND-BLOWN GLORY

Lighting has a way of elevating moods and decor in a way few home accessories can. This Viola lamp in amber from Roche Bobois designed by Alessio Bassan (also available in ruby) is a case in point. Crafted in hand-blown Murano

glass, it comes with a with a steel ring with a grey varnish finish.

**Price** ₹1.37 lakh (large); ₹1.13 lakh (small)

**Availability** Roche Bobois store, Mumbai

### ROYAL SEAT

Bold colours are a big trend in home decor, especially with the approaching festive season. So lay it on thick with this solid teak chair upholstered in turquoise velvet with antique crushed tissue appliqué work. This stunner from Furniture Library is sure to stand out in any setting.

**Price** on request

**Availability** Furniture Library, Mehrauli, New Delhi



### GILDED CAGE

A surefire way to glamourise your home interiors is by adding a chandelier or two. It may not qualify as subtle, but it definitely makes a statement. The Erte Chandelier from Visionnaire is a fine example with four concentric flounces in aluminium plates anodized in natural or gold shades with a wavy rim.

**Price** ₹10 lakh

**Availability** [www.visionnaire-home.com](http://www.visionnaire-home.com)



### CENTRESTAGE

Communing with nature seems to be central theme for the Croissant coffee and side table. They celebrate the traditional Filipina craftsmanship and plays with earthy materials to embrace contemporary concepts with innovative constructional techniques.

**Price** Croissant Center Table ₹57,000; Croissant Side Table ₹36,000

**Availability** Idus, Delhi



# AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER

DIAMONDS MAY NOT BE YOUR BEST FRIEND BUT THEY ARE DEFINITELY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ONES



With the tradition of *shringar* in India inextricably linked to marital felicity, the significance and symbolism of bridal jewellery can hardly be overstated. The pirouetting sequence of diamonds weaves a stunning narrative with this beautifully handcrafted necklace. The diamond emerald flower necklace is set in 18 carat white gold and is a statement piece to end all conversation. The pear, marquise and round shaped diamonds have been carefully selected and studded to create a natural flow in the design. While the round diamonds encircling the piece are symbolic of the sacred covenant of marriage, the colour green is associated with nature and thus represents the petals of the flower in this design. Customised earrings matched to perfection with the necklace are also available to complete the composition. Price on request.

Available at Hazoorilal Jewellers By Sandeep Narang

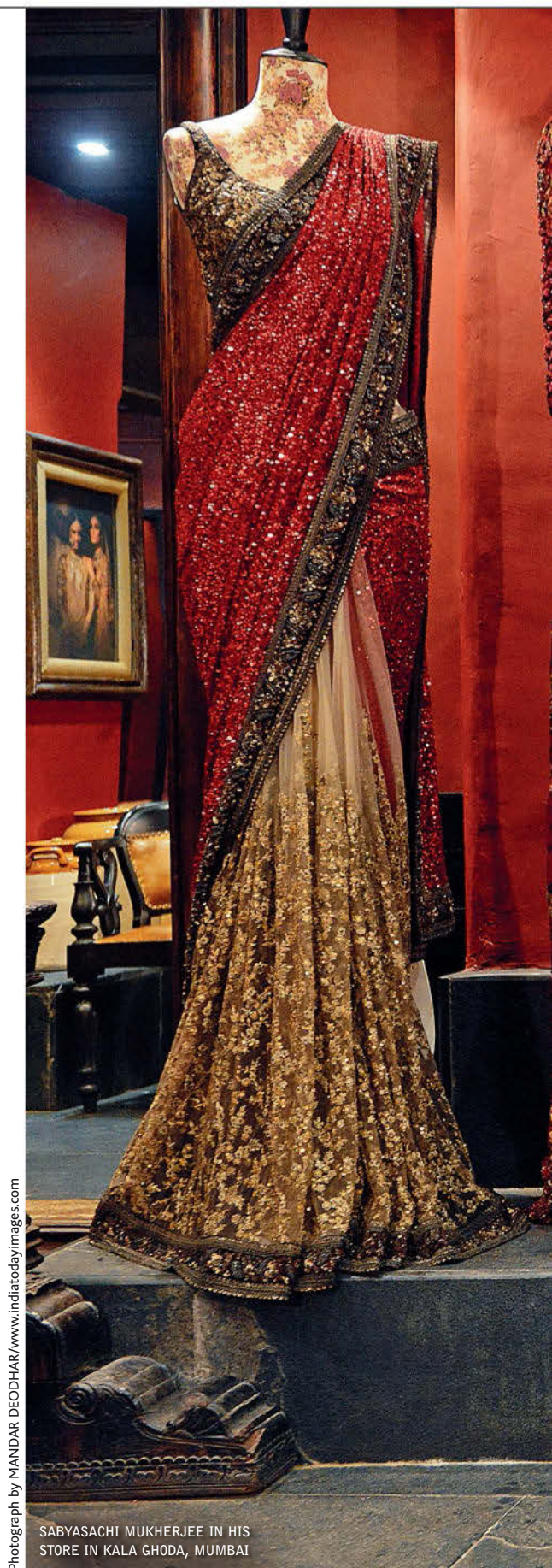


# NOT A RUNWAY BRIDE

SABYASACHI'S WEDDING AESTHETIC IS A POTENT MIX OF STRONG TRADITIONALISM AND SUBTLE INDIVIDUALISM

BY SUHANI SINGH

Step into Sabyasachi Mukherjee's store at Kala Ghoda in Mumbai and one enters an idyllic world, far from the cacophony of the city. Shrouded in demure lights, it compels the visitors to look and admire; charming walls full of framed carpets and quaint ceramic plates, chandeliers, rock pillars, giant clocks, ittar bottles and other curios. *Pakeezah*'s soundtrack plays at the faintest of levels as women flock in to shop for that's certainly going to be the biggest, and loudest, day of their life. It's hard to believe that its owner, designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee aka Sabya, still chooses to live in a rented 1 BHK apartment in Kolkata. Ask him about the disparity between his professional life, in which he celebrates exuberance with his bridal wear, and his personal, in which he practices simplicity, Sabyasachi says, "I don't have memorabilia, photographs and favourite shirts. I live in the moment. You can be a successful designer or



Photograph by MANDAR DEODHAR/www.indiatodayimages.com

SABYASACHI MUKHERJEE IN HIS STORE IN KALA GHODA, MUMBAI







## SABYASACHI'S DESIGN IDIOM

A SCENIC VIEW OF DARJEELING, ONE OF THE DESIGNER'S FAVOURITE DESTINATIONS IN THE COUNTRY



### FAVOURITE DESTINATIONS

**Darjeeling** there is something very quaint about it. Haridwar is stunning, as is Kaziranga in Assam. I love Paris. I can go there over and over again and fall in love with the city every time. I want to go to Romania and Argentina.

### BRIDAL INDULGENCES

Invest in handcrafted jewellery and a good woven sari. Let your bridal trousseau be a combination of Indian textiles and handicrafts. You might not understand the value of it right now but it will be priceless later.

### PERSONAL INDULGENCES

I don't like owning too many things. I like my Jaguar because it is a beautifully made car.

### MOST MEMORABLE WEDDING YOU ATTENDED

Rani Mukerji's wedding in Italy. It was very traditional and simple. It was all about the core and nothing about the periphery.

### A SABYA HAUTE COUTURE BRIDE IS...

Confident and proud. If you want to look beautiful, accept yourself the way you are. People go crazy over skin lightening, weight issues...I tell them that the man you are getting married to chose you for the way you are. Putting your best foot forward is one thing, but to lose yourself in the process is definitely not a good idea.

### PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE YOU

Women who don't dye their hair, like to eat, have a feisty, boisterous laugh, don't have weight and wrinkle issues, and really don't care about my brand.

### TRENDS IN BRIDAL WEAR

This year, it's all red and gold. Red is the colour that flatters Indian skin the most. Benares silks, Chanderi, Maheshwari and Kanjeevarams, zardozi, gota, and nakshi work, and everything that is traditional.

### FAVOURITE INTERNATIONAL DESIGNERS

**Valentino** for its great craftsmanship, beautifully made and believable clothes. And Chloe.



A MODEL ON THE RUNWAY FOR VALENTINO'S s/s 2016 COLLECTION

ACTOR DIA MIRZA IN A YELLOW KANJEEVARAM SARI



### TROUSSEAU ESSENTIALS

Never buy fashion for your trousseau. Buy lots of day wear which should be a mix of classic and easy contemporary. Invest in a good swim suit and a great pair of jeans. If you want something lavish, you must get a Benarasi or a Kanjeevaram sari.

### BIGGEST BRIDAL FAUX PAS

Wearing modern jewellery with heritage clothing. A bride doesn't know where to stop when it comes to designing her wedding look. People have this idea that too much of everything can sometimes be beautiful. It can be if you know how to put it together. If your jewellery is heavy, then wear understated clothing.

### HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE LUXURY?

Anything that is time bound and time intensive constitutes real luxury, simply because you can't produce too much of it.



an entrepreneur only when you are detached from what you do. I keep it alive deliberately. If I was to live the life that I sell, I would go mad.”

The designer sure knows a thing or two about how to drive his soon-to-be brides crazy with his lehengas-blouses and saris. In the two hours we spent at the store, young women along with their female friends and family members walked up to him at regular intervals seeking his thoughts on their ensemble. Sabyasachi is generous and sincere with his compliments and brimming with suggestions, a side also seen on the TV show, *Band Baaja Bride*, in which he helps brides put together their trousseau. He has catered to them for over a decade and lived up to their changing tastes, demands and expectations. “Earlier it was all about does it look heavy enough?” he says. “Right now, with social media in full swing, the question I’m asked often, “is it going to photograph well?” The picture will be up on Instagram; it will be their whatsapp

profile picture and used on Facebook as their DP. The photograph is more important than anything; sometimes more than the groom itself.”

In the wedding market, where “more is more” is an aesthetic long cherished, Sabyasachi is one of the few designers who has stuck to his own artistic standards and not allowed customers to intervene in his creative process. That isn’t to say that there won’t be any embellished outfits in his collection, but they’ll rarely be an eyesore. No customisation is the mandate of his brand, says Sabyasachi. “Sometimes people come to you to design an outfit with the arrogance



SABYASACHI DRESSING UP A MODEL AT THE VOGUE WEDDING SHOW IN NEW DELHI THIS YEAR

**“I make it my business to be repetitive. Great repetition makes a brand iconic. If a brand is different every year, it is a schizophrenic brand that doesn’t belong anywhere.”**





of money,” he says. “We don’t deal with that. We put in a lot of time and effort in balancing a product in a way that even though there is exuberance, it doesn’t go overboard and become tacky.” Sabyasachi trains his female staff, who in turn are taught to “re-educate the clientele” that the perfect wedding clothing is about “finding a balance between your personality and your clothes, jewellery, make-up and decor.”

Nobody becomes one of the foremost designers in bridal fashion by having an exclusive clientele. Sabyasachi ensures he appeases both “the followers who go in for more fashion-driven products and go ‘mental’ with exuberance” and “the innovators who are more assertive and more cultured and quieter”. A member of the latter group includes a Sabya bride who dared to wear ivory as opposed to the trademark red on her wedding day. The colour took off with more and more brides making cheaper imitations of the attire.

A popular designer has a legion of fans but he also has to have a fair share of detractors. Over the years, Sabyasachi has been dismissed as “old-fashioned”, “same old” and “backward” with his unapologetic passion for traditional wear. But these tags don’t perturb him. Instead he sees them as praise, knowing that he is succeeding in his mission to “pay homage to tradition, to preserve it”. “I make it my business to be repetitive. Great repetition makes a brand iconic,” he says. “If a brand is different every year, it is a schizophrenic brand that doesn’t belong anywhere.” He adds, “A bride may like to wear whatever she wants to on her wedding day but it is red that always looks best. Tradition is not something that you break year after year. I think keeping wedding traditional in India is sacrosanct because it gives you a certain holistic feeling of being married; otherwise it feels like playing with dolls.”

Sabyasachi has made a business out of wedding wear but it’s the very commercialisation of the industry that disturbs him. He talks about how he isn’t a fan of weddings which follow the unhealthy trend of having multiple food counters. “You are nibbling on everything without getting a taste of anything and then you return home and have a

**“I don’t have memorabilia, photographs and favourite shirts. I live in the moment. You can be a successful designer or an entrepreneur only when you are detached from what you do. I keep it alive deliberately. If I was to live the life that I sell, I would go mad”**



Hajmola,” he says. Spending a lot of money doesn’t necessarily mean “creating experiences or memories”. “It is very important to edit our lives,” he adds. “The divinity of getting married has completely collapsed because of the show-ism that has come up. In Bengal we have a saying that the core should always be more important than the periphery. In the wedding market, it is the opposite now, unfortunately.”

At least with his creations, Sabyasachi makes a conscious effort to create something memorable. He recognises that he is making something that is everlasting, which is likely to be a family treasure, passed on from generation to generation. “I keep telling my assistants that we are collectively breeding a brand that is only going to gather more momentum after we have left and not while we are alive,” he says. It explains why his customers are willing to meet the price of the quality craftsmanship and exclusivity he promises. “We put our heart and soul in creating these wonderful things, which if they are not restored, rescued or conserved might not see the light of day years later,” he says. “I jokingly tell my friends that 35 years later if you sell one of these pieces, you can actually buy a house in Manhattan. You will probably be the only one holding on to a piece that nobody else can reproduce in the world.”

It’s what keeps women coming back to him. Sridevi, one of his oldest and most devoted customers, was at the store getting her hands on a sari. “Your older daughter is looking more and more like you every day, which is only a good thing,” said Sabyasachi, a self-confessed fan of the actress. Arpita Khan Sharma, better known as Salman Khan’s youngest sister, also came with her friends to splurge. They all love him for his passion for Indian traditional textiles and handicraft techniques. Sabyasachi is only happy to regale his clients with stories of his ageing karigars whom he dotes on even though they are not always the easiest to work with. “You have no idea what I have to go through,” he says to a group of women. “But you deserve to tolerate their whims. I bow my head to people who know their craft.” Sabyasachi has mastered the craft of what looks best on a bride. That earns him both respect and admiration.

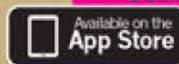
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# TROUSSEAU TREASURES

THIS WEDDING SEASON BRINGS IN A WHOLE NEW PERSPECTIVE TO COUTURE. HERE'S LOOKING AT ALL THAT MAKES THE CUT.



**ANJU MODI**  
Fashion Designer

In India, weddings aren't just about the ceremony. We as a country have a strong sentimental, emotional connect with each function leading up to the main event, the wedding. These are intimate affairs stretching into weeks of revelry that focus on the bride and groom, but are just as much about their families coming together.

The cultural and traditional context of weddings is deeply embedded in our minds. The strong emotional connect has mothers planning their daughters' trousseaus for months, if not years, in advance. Heirloom jewellery pieces are saved for these special occasions, passed on from mother to daughter or daughter-in-law, generation after generation. The vintage wardrobe of beautiful, exquisite and traditional zari saris, the craftsmanship of the pashminas; the garments and outfits form just as essential a part in bringing alive this grand spirit of celebration.

Today, as we try to straddle modernity with tradition, especially when celebrating weddings, it is all but natural that wedding and bridal fashion have evolved to transform the elegance of convention with the threads and weaves that are more contemporary.

## LIGHTER, ELEGANT ENSEMBLES

Ostentation, once a central theme at weddings, has given way to understated sophistication and grace that reflect the

grandeur of the occasion. The bride should not have to feel weighed down by her bridal outfits, and should be able to enjoy her day with as much ease. Also, with more and more people opting for destination weddings, there has been a clear, albeit refreshing, shift towards lighter yet elegant ensembles. I feel that when the bride keeps her look, from outfit to jewellery and makeup, simple and classic, she exudes her natural bridal glow and beauty.

## ART OF LAYERING

Layering is another key trend that brides-to-be should look out for. The way textiles are manipulated, draped and sewn together completely changes the silhouette and the way the garment appears. Layers not only help make the lehenga or anarkali more extravagant while maintaining a subtle elegance, but also add character and distinctiveness to the ensemble. It could take the form of draping the dupatta in a unique way or a more apparent layering of anarkali top or jacket with a full skirt. This is a very versatile trend that every bride can incorporate in her wedding outfit as a nuanced integration or as a focused design element.

## NEW SILHOUETTES AND CUTS

As a reflection of the evolution of customers, who are now more appreciative of nuances of design, more and more designers have



LAYERING OF WEDDING  
OUTFITS WILL BE A MAJOR  
TREND THIS SEASON

**The bride should not have to feel weighed down by her bridal outfits, and should be able to enjoy her day with as much ease; also with more and more people opting for destination weddings, there has been a clear, albeit refreshing, shift towards lighter yet elegant ensembles**





THE NEW COLOUR PALETTE FOR WEDDING COUTURE INCLUDES IVORY, BLUE AND PASTEL SHADES AMONG OTHERS

started to focus on design elements to create unique silhouettes, cuts and embroideries. Pairing the traditional lehenga with a crop top is one silhouette that is high on trend, style and fashion. It marries the customary wedding ensemble with contemporary design and aesthetic. The runways and presentations are filled with this particular pairing/outfit, as it is one of the top trends this bridal/wedding season.

### CHANGING THE COLOUR PALETTE

The design trends permeate even the colour palette. With every bride-to-be desiring a standout look for their wedding day and functions that ensue before that, the traditional reds have given way to unique and interesting combinations. A more avant-garde and experimental bride can explore a palette and combinations such as ivory and mint, shades of blue, turquoise and yellow;

the softer, pastel shades that are in keeping with muted elegance. But even traditionalists can be experimental while holding true to their customs; colour pairings like rose pinks with reds or mints with reds retain the innate colour associated with weddings, but introduce an interesting twist.

### SEPARATES ARE IN

Separates like *farshis* have also made a comeback. Possibly more suited to one of the wedding functions rather than the wedding itself, long kurtas paired with *farshis* and a long, anarkali-style jacket make a unique look for the mehendi or sangeet. It gives the bride ease of movement to join in the celebrations. Brides have also started to opt for full-length gowns for cocktail and ring ceremonies. With a multitude of silhouette options to choose from, the trousseau can easily be a diaspora of design elements, colour and ensemble choices.



# THE CLASSIC CALVIN KLEIN



CALVIN KLEIN ROUND

Iconic. Unstoppable. Calvin Klein infinite. A timeless construction inspired by accuracy and elegance. Calvin Klein infinite features a polished and brushed stainless steel or PVD pink gold case with a silver, cool grey, black or blue dial and is finished with a black leather or polished and brushed stainless steel strap. Each watch is finished with a "Calvin Klein" logo at 12 o'clock and features polished white superluminova hour and minute hands that subtly illuminate in the dark for convenience.

Water resistant to 3 bar.

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Model</b>	Gent
<b>Functions</b>	Hour, minute, second, date at 3H
<b>Case</b>	Polished & brushed stainless steel Polished & brushed pink gold PVD 5N
<b>Dial</b>	Silver, black, cool grey, blue
<b>Bracelet</b>	Polished & brushed stainless steel
<b>Strap</b>	Black leather
<b>Closure</b>	Strap: pin buckle Bracelet: deployant buckle with push button
<b>Hands</b>	Polished with white superluminova Polished pink gold PVD 5N with White superluminova

Transparent. Ephemeral. Calvin Klein round. A luminous bracelet accented by geometric cut-out details simultaneously reveals and conceals the wrist of the wearer. This light and refined timepiece is offered in polished stainless steel, PVD yellow or PVD pink gold and either a black, silver or mirror dial. Calvin Klein round is finished with a "Calvin Klein" logo at 12 o'clock.

Water resistant to 3 bar.

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Model</b>	Lady
<b>Functions</b>	Hour, minute
<b>Case</b>	Polished stainless steel Polished yellow gold PVD 1N Polished pink gold PVD 5N
<b>Dial</b>	Silver, black, mirror
<b>Bracelet</b>	Polished & brushed stainless steel Polished & brushed yellow gold PVD 1N Polished & brushed pink gold PVD 5N
<b>Closure</b>	Jewelry closure
<b>Hands</b>	Polished Polished yellow gold PVD 1N Polished pink gold PVD 5N



CALVIN KLEIN INFINITE

For further information please contact: Public Relations, ck Watch + Jewelry  
Co. Ltd., Viaduktstrasse 30, CH-2501 Biel





Photograph by BARKER EVANS

**SARAH  
HAYWOOD**  
Wedding Planner

# TOP WAYS TO SAY I DO

PLANNING A WEDDING? GO THE WHOLE HOG AS YOU WEIGH IN ON TOP TRENDS THAT WILL MAKE THE EVENT TRULY MAGICAL.





Photographs by CARLA TEN EYCK

**OPULENT WEDDINGS**  
WITH A ROYAL  
THEME ARE BIG THIS  
SEASON (DESIGNED BY  
SARAH HAYWOOD)

**PUDDING STATIONS**  
(AS THIS ONE DESIGNED  
BY SARAH HAYWOOD)  
IS ONE OF THE MOST  
COVETED SPACES  
AT RECEPTIONS



**S**tyle, glamour and sophistication never date and I like the weddings we plan with our clients to, in as luxurious a way possible, truly represent them as individuals and as a couple and to say something about their shared values, and their sense of style. I try and curate design around the couple without thinking too hard about what might or might not be on-trend. Such a personal occasion should not be dictated by what the latest fad is. So my advice is to always follow your heart as well as your head and simply design an occasion that states something about who you are. That said, if you are looking for opulent inspiration, here is what we are loving planning this season.

## WISHING TREE

This is a quaint idea where guests write their hopes and wishes for the couple which are in turn tied to a tree. This could be on a real tree outdoors, or one that is a bespoke design and specially installed. And remember to have a beautiful box to collect and store them in for posterity.

## IMAGINATIVE BEVERAGES

Weddings are no longer just about champagne fountains (and I love the opulent glamour of these) but signature cocktails and mocktails are right on trend this year with colour and sensational ingredients from moon water with real gold, to drinks with chili and chocolate. And how the drinks are served and what they are served in being crucial to an outstanding bev-

erage service. Always, if the budget will allow, use a specialist company rather than leaving it to caterers who are generally more focused on food than they are on drink.

## PUDDING STATIONS

Pudding Stations (or 'Dessert Buffet' if you are in America!) these are right back on trend with opulent design and miniature desserts being the order of the day so that guests can sample a variety of textures and flavours from figs with gold leaf, to frosted-fruit lollipops and edible terrariums. The sky is really the limit when it comes to these sweet confections that wow guests.

## MIRRORED TABLE TOPS

As far as opulent design goes, the trend for the coming season is mirrored table-tops. We've taken this a stage further with mirrored acrylic napkins charms with the couples' monogram (which we always incorporate into the stationery and wedding design) and individual guests' names inscribed to indicate where they are seated for the wedding dinner.

## FAIRYTALE ENDINGS

Always plan for a grand departure. Whether by a glamorous vintage car or horse and carriage, let the last image guests remember of you on your wedding day be a fabulous, one with a fairytale end to the celebrations. It is after all your moment in the sun.

*website* [www.sarahhaywood.com](http://www.sarahhaywood.com)





# ROMANCING **SOLITUDE**

WILDLY ROMANTIC, PERFECTLY SECLUDED AND SPECTACULARLY BEAUTIFUL,  
THIS BOWER OF WANTON LOVE IS THE PERFECT HONEYMOON DESTINATION



THE HOMESTEAD-STYLE VILLAS  
WITH STEEP ESCARPMENTS AND  
GUM TREES SHROUDED IN A  
CLOUD OF MIST

BY CHUMKI BHARADWAJ

**T**he preservation of memory is magic; it allows you to revisit, relive, and even rewrite the narrative, edited only by the fanciful footnotes of imagination. So it's difficult to state with any degree of certainty if the Emirates One and Only Wolgan Valley, consigned to memory now, was every bit as achingly beautiful or is it just creative license that nostalgia is exacting.

What does stand tall though, is the intriguing blue of the Greater Blue Mountains, the lofty perch of the resort. As the light

changes, the mood shifts from a melancholic indigo to a darker, more threatening velvet of squid ink. Of course, most hills look blue at a distance, but in Australia, the scattering effect of the sun, reflected by the vapours of the gum trees simply magnifies the illusion. As you approach the resort, via an electrified gate, you can't help but envision yourself in a last-gasp, spaghetti Western. Crested on all sides by gold and russet escarpments, the fields of pasture grasses on which the Audi Q 7 bumps along (there are no tar roads





through the resort) is a visual re-enactment of *McKenna's Gold* territory. With wild and domesticated horses tossing manes and stomping around impatiently, the calmly chewing kangaroos and wallaroos are the only visual cues that this is Australia and not Colorado.

**Location scores.** Wedged between the Wollemi National Park and the Gardens of Stone National Park, the resort inhabits only two per cent of the 4000-acre conservancy area. Unless you get there, it's difficult to fathom just how crazily, wonderfully, romantically remote you're going to be. The solitude of detachment isn't just a charming tagline but its prime seduction.

Such is the spectacle of the natural scenic splendour that sensibly enough, the resort architecture does not even venture to compete, and instead, opts for a reference in Australian identity, drawing on local rural history. The resort is festooned with Federation-style homesteads with a corrugated-iron roof, screened breezeway, front verandahs, and

pebbled pathways. The interior design follows suit with natural materials such as sandstone and timber that echo the landscape. The restraint, however, does little to dilute the sense of arrival. It occasions a rare opportunity to experience true luxury in a spectacular Australian bush setting.

**Frills that thrill.** Beyond the reception is the main homestead with glassed walls that distract the eye with floor-to-ceiling views over the valley, an elegant dining room with massive double-sided sandstone fireplaces, recycled timber beams running across, a verandah terrace, bar spaces, wine cellar and a private dining room. The look and feel is quaint without dripping nostalgia and the attention to detail, involved rather than frantic.

However, it's the softer nuances that take your breath away. The welcoming smoky aroma of log fires (it was peak winter in June), smiling staff that ensures you're never too far away from the spicy warmth of mulled wine; seating so comfortable that sinking in, to nev-



THE 83 SQM HERITAGE VILLA WITH A POOL, LIVING ROOM AND FLY-SCREENED VERANDAH



AN EXOTIC PICNIC LUNCH IN THE WILD



THE TIMELESS SPA OFFERS SIX SECLUDED TREATMENT ROOMS





## READY RECKONER

**Location** Emirates One & Only Wolgan Valley is located 190 km or a three-hour drive north-west of Sydney

**Accommodation and Rates** 40 freestanding villas, comprising 36 one-bedroom Heritage suites for two (AUS\$ 2050\*), three two-bedroom Wollemi

suites for up to four guests (AUS\$ 3700\*), and one two-bedroom Wolgan suite with separate staff quarters and its own kitchen, for up to six guests (AUS\$ 5700\*) *\*per suite per night all-year round*

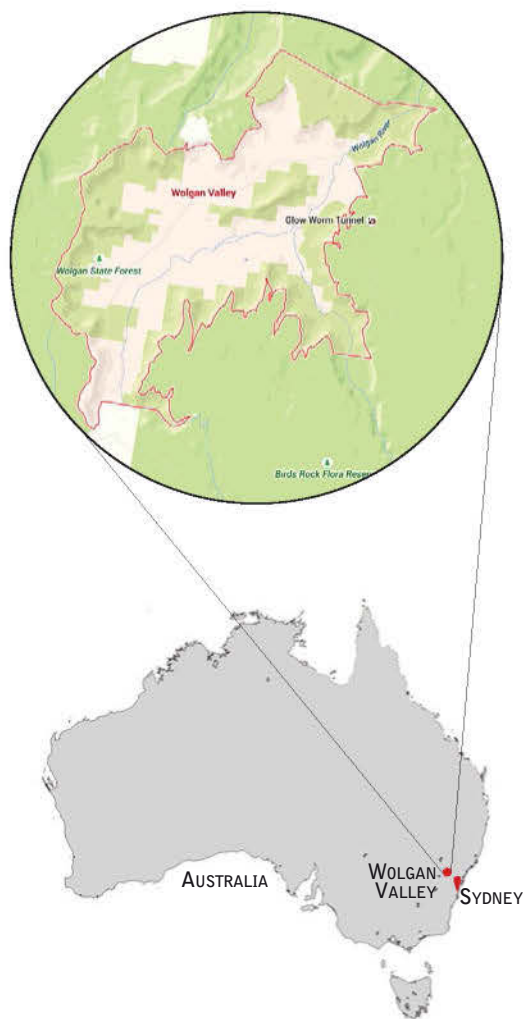
**Activities** Jeep safaris, picnic lunches in the wild, nature walks, heritage tours,

mountain biking and horseback riding.

**Coordinates** + 61 2 9308 0550; +61 2 6350 1800; [reservations@oneandonlywolganvalley.com](mailto:reservations@oneandonlywolganvalley.com); [info@oneandonlywolganvalley.com](mailto:info@oneandonlywolganvalley.com) *Mobile coverage is not available but free WiFi access across the resort is.*








### GETTING THERE

- Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa is a dramatic three-hour drive from Sydney, through the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area. The closest township is Lithgow, 35 kilometres to the South.
- Alternatively, helicopter transfers take just 45 minutes from Sydney and pass over one of the most dramatic landscapes in Australia, before touching down at the resort's private helipad.

 THE RESORT IS LOCATED 190 KM NORTH WEST OF SYDNEY IN WOLGAN VALLEY

er surface again, seems only logical. Thoughtful touches include helmets and backpacks with bikes on your porch and buggy rides to ferry you around with hot water bottles on cold nights for rear-end comfort.

**Luxury with a conscience.** What makes this luxury experience truly unique is that the resort is the first in the world to be certified carbon-neutral by New Zealand-based Carbon Zero; a programme monitoring greenhouse gas managements. So, wherever possible, natural and recycled materials were sourced within a 100 km radius (most of the building timber was found on the site). The food is seasonal, regional and wherever possible, organic, and sourced from boutique providores, growers and orcharders in the Blue Mountains region, as well as famous wineries of the Hunter Valley, Mudgee and Orange. The resort also boasts a thriving kitchen garden that serves wonderfully fresh vegetables and herbs for the restaurants.

**Local, seasonal, organic.** Breakfast and lunch is served in the more elegant confines of the Wolgan dining room with its lofty, timber-beamed ceilings and sandstone walls. Refined, yet down-to-earth, the food here celebrates the bounty of Wolgan Valley, with each meal featuring simple flavour combinations, high quality ingredients, plated beautifully. Lunch is a more casual, homey affair in The Country Kitchen with a providore-style lunch room. Ideally located in the main homestead, it serves wholesome, delicious food with a pervasive scent of freshly baked artisan bread and house-roasted coffee. Expect anything local and fresh from seared silver Dory served with sweet corn, butterbean and clam chowder to bangers and mash to a roasted sweet potato salad served with puy lentils, beetroot, feta and rocket or go with seasonal blackboards specials for inspiration.

**Indulgence.** Since the entire vibe of the resort is reflective and meditative, one wonders about the usefulness of an on-site spa. But one short visit, and this tranquil retreat of glass and timber luxuriousness simply becomes a must-do extension of the letting-go programme. An exquisite range of treatments designed to revitalise mind, body and soul are on offer. The Rejuvenate (2 hours 30 minutes) involves a bathing ritual in warm herbal waters, exfoliation, a wrap and some facial and hair treatments that begin in a whiff of scented aromas and end with a flurry of soft hand movements. The end result: a princess complex.

While eating, relaxing and luxuriating aren't the only activities worth pursuing (see box), the independent villas offer rough-chic cribs that are impossible to view as mere sleeping arrangements. Each villa is swathed in warm, earthy tones, plush linens, private decks and stunning views of the valley. The highlight is definitely the indoor/outdoor pool, ensconced in a glasshouse, with water heated to a toasty 28 degrees C, still perfect for the cooler months.

For those who fuss over details, there's separate living and bedroom facilities, a double-sided fireplace, huge walk-in wardrobe, spacious bathroom with a deep bath and a sky-lit shower, two televisions, complimentary mini bar and a beautiful fly-screened veranda with rocking chairs. Others who simply enjoy the spirit of nature, a lightness of touch and transcendent charm should focus on those rocking chairs and watch the sun disappear into the craggy rocks of gold. You don't realise how entranced you are till you're ensnared. "There is a fellowship more quiet even than solitude, and which, rightly understood, is solitude made perfect."

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**MARCY BLUM**  
Wedding Planner

# NUPTIAL NUGGETS

TOP FIVE INGREDIENTS THAT WILL MAKE A MAGICAL  
DIFFERENCE TO YOUR WEDDING



Photograph by FRED MARCUS

  
CASTIGLIONE DEL  
BOSCO, ITALY  
BY NIGHT.

## Attention to detail and personalisation are key as weddings mirror the best parts of the way we live rather than being a separate, distinctly contrived arena all to themselves

**W**hat makes weddings most interesting and unique these days is very much the things that are experiential rather than solely visual. I find that at our weddings, the brides and grooms want to delight and surprise their guests by creating something that will be memorable. Of course the floral and décor design must be gorgeous and innovative, but weddings are about much more than just décor; they are about telling the story of the couple, their families, their taste and style. They are about entertaining the guests in unexpected ways and ensuring that the hospitality shown to the guests is of the highest level. Here are the top five ingredients that make a magical wedding

### TIMING

These weddings not only contain innumerable details but are timed to the minute. The irony of a well-planned wedding is that, while we, the producers, are on a tightly formatted schedule, the couple and their guests are blissfully unaware of this behind-the-scenes rigidity. To them, things are flowing easily and smoothly. Personally, I detest the traditional wedding timing, which has dance sets between courses. I think it ruins both the food and the mood. At our events, we create one atmosphere for dinner: Innovative background music, wonderful wines and creative, delicious food, another for the dancing portion and a different vibe completely for the late night portion of the wedding. Timing constitutes the alchemy for any event; it's what makes the difference.

### LATE NIGHT PARTIES

Late night "after-parties" have been a trend for several years now but are slowly becoming an essential ingredient for a successful wedding party. What is happening now, however, is that this portion of the wedding is as important (sometimes even more important) to the couple than the dinner part of the reception. We design lavish dessert buffets for these lounges, have a variety of unique entertainment and often, if the parties go on till the morning hours, we serve bite-size breakfast options for those

guests that are hungry again. At a tented formal wedding in Maine, we had an entire barbecue and beer bar set that only began well after 3 am.

### UNCONVENTIONAL DINING

The focus on food remains unchanged and finding the right caterer is at the top of most couples' list. In fact, some couples forgo any seated dinner at all. While they serve lots of food at chic and elegantly designed stations, they prefer to have a non-traditional format, one that focuses intensely on food and wines. Others opt for more intimate and extravagant wine and food pairing dinners (usually 100 guests or fewer), with the dancing part being less important to them than the experience of a beautifully prepared and presented meal. These meals are what make the event memorable.

### PERSONALISATION

Attention to detail and personalisation are key. Today, weddings mirror the best parts of the way we live, rather than being a separate, distinctly contrived arena all to themselves. Producers and brides and grooms alike, are getting their inspiration from food magazines, restaurants, world travel and pop concerts (lighting and special effects for example) rather than more traditional sources. Even our couples who want a religious ceremony, want it juxtaposed with a unique and personalised party to follow.

### CHOOSING THE PERFECT LOCATION

It's all about location. Destination weddings continue to be a growing trend, however, the size of the guest list has increased dramatically. What originally began as small gatherings has now transitioned into large groups of 100 people or more. With guests travelling long distances, wedding celebrations have turned into mini vacations, beginning on either a Wednesday or Thursday continuing as long as to the following Monday with welcome dinners and fabulous Sunday brunches. Another interesting aspect is that both families and close friends are starting to accompany the bride and groom on their honeymoon (just as Jennifer Aniston and new husband Justin Theroux did for their honeymoon).





# RISE AND SHINE

THE EVOLUTION OF THE GANJAM BRAND AS  
A LUXURY MARQUE OVER 125 YEARS

BY CHUMKI BHARADWAJ



It has all the hallmarks of Camelot; King Arthur would have been pleased. Rama, 78, sits hunched on the floor, bent double over a small wooden table, some archaic-looking hand tools and an unpolished gold ring for company. Consumed by the obsessive detail of his handiwork, his weathered hands coast obsessively over the ring, smoothing out any bumps or bubbles in the metal. That is what he has been doing for all of his working life at Ganjam: 45 years. And, it's not just him. Obsessive commitment is the promise all sixty people at the Ganjam Heritage workshop summon to the table; some of whom have been working with the brand for four generations. Zealousness is the calling card of this luxury jewellery marque where a great design is measured in the details. From melting, moulding, shaping, setting stones and polishing; the birth of the shape is a story in accuracy, symmetry and geometry; crafted by hand with each craftsman working on one piece from start to finish.

The Ganjam story began 125 years ago, trading gems in a town called Ganjam in Orissa; they moved to Hampi, and finally to Mysore, which was the capital of the state of Karnataka then. The brand's stunning designs found royal patronage with the Wodeyars of Mysore and the royal family of Nepal, and continues even today with the royal families of the UK and Japan. The most significant development in the creative journey of this global brand has been a shift from its traditional roots as a south Indian jeweller using 22 carat gold with diamonds, rubies and emeralds to a contemporary brand focussed on design, colour and even the use of some semi precious stones set in 18 carat gold. Design became core only in 1996-97 when a design studio was introduced, bringing different designers on board to work on unusual and avant garde designs. From traditional craftsmanship to contemporary glamour, ask Umesh Ganjam, joint managing director, to define the essence of the Ganjam aesthetic and he says, "Classic contemporary; handcrafted, design-intensive jewellery using the best of everything".



## THALAIKKACHUCHU

A traditional head ornament, Thalaikkachuchu is typically a bridal ornament and is also a part of the traditional 'Kundla Velai', crafts-manship in 22K gold. Burmese rubies are set into 'V' shaped motifs, with dangling elements of a single ruby set in pear-shaped element, with a pearl hanging from it.





## NECKLACES & KADA

### THE HERITAGE COLLECTION

The collection uses traditional craftsmanship to pay tribute to the rich cultural and artistic history of India. The unique features of this collection are rubies from the old Burmese mines, uncut diamonds and cabochon emeralds, all set in 22k yellow gold. With the old Burmese ruby mines now extinct, the rubies have been acquired over a period of time, taking months to complete a piece of jewellery.



NECKLACE, EARRINGS  
& BRACELET

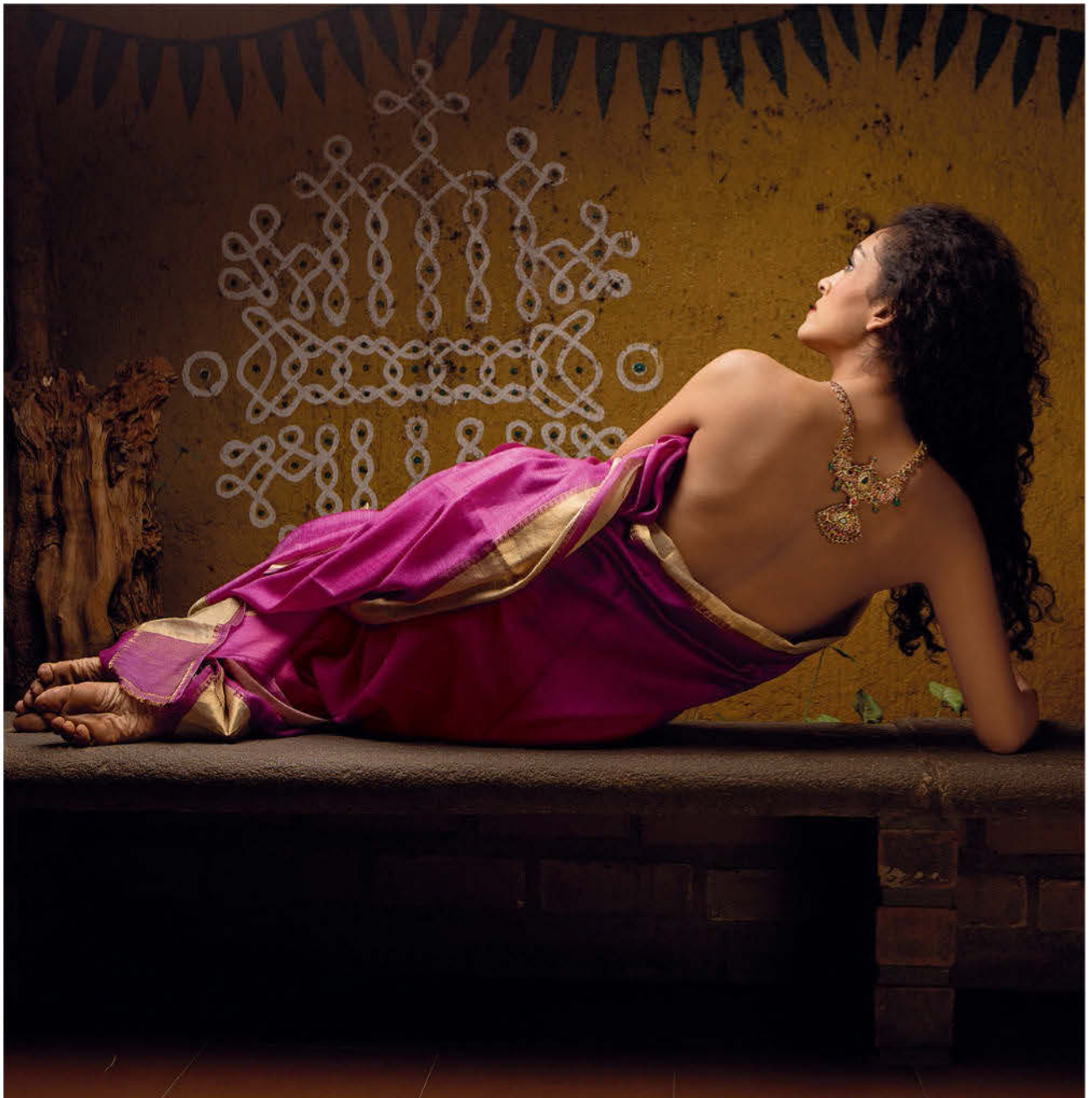
## IKAT COLLECTION

Inspired by the traditional 'ikat' weave of Gujarat, the collection is predominantly red, white and yellow woven into geometrical patterns. It uses Burmese rubies and diamonds set in 18k yellow gold



## MAKARAKANTI HARA

The 'Makarakanti' is a ceremonial necklace. The main gemstone used in this style of jewellery is cabochon Burmese rubies with highlights of rose cut or Benaras cut diamonds and emeralds which could be cut or cabochon. Traditionally, this necklace has a central large floral motif, which is flanked by forms inspired by nature. This piece, however, uses two peacocks to frame the central motif. The lower pendant of the necklace has a central floral motif surrounded by motifs inspired by foliage.



CHOKER & RING  
**NIZAM COLLECTION**

This handcrafted choker reflects the magnificent Nizam's personal jewels. The graduating sizes of pearls are skillfully strung together to complement the elaborately studded unit. The 'f' colour brilliant cut diamond, rose cut, briolette and tourmalines highlight the large rubellite that is central to the design.



PHOTOGRAPHS **SELVAPRAKASH L**  
STYLING **SAURAV BHANOT**  
MODEL **RUKMINI VIJAYAKUMAR**  
HAIR & MAKE UP **PUSHPA KRISHNAPPA**  
HAIR & MAKE UP ASSISTANT **SUMAN SINGH**  
SAREES COURTESY **HOUSE OF ANGADI**  
LOCATION COURTESY **GANJAM MANTAPPA, BANGALORE**



# “OMEGA KEEPS ME RELEVANT”

CINDY CRAWFORD, WHO HAS BEEN A BRAND AMBASSADOR FOR OMEGA FOR TWO DECADES, TALKS TIME, FASHION AND FAMILY

## Your career evolution

“When I was 20 years old and working as a model, I used to think that my career would be over when I’m 25. When I was 25 I thought, I’d get a real job when I’m 30. I kept visualising the future as drastically changed by the next five years till I reached 40. Now I’m turning 50 in February and I realise it was about me being honest to who I was. I did my first exercise tape when I was in my 20s and I was completely into working out. But, I didn’t do it to make money. I did it because I was really passionate about fitness. I launched my skin care line when I was in my 30s as a model who was getting older and interested in taking care of my skin. That’s how my interest in beauty and, by extension, good cosmetic care developed. It was a very authentic interest stemming from passion.”

## Which natural products that you use?

“I don’t always see natural as better (laughs). Good cosmetic care with top-notch ingredients is often the best gift you can give your skin. I like to sauna. I do a lot of infrared sauna. I’m not one of those people who use cucumber. My daughter is at that age where she’s trying honey and yoghurt and everything organic. I guess at this stage I want products that are very effective.”

## Fashion then and now

“When Anna Wintour came to American *Vogue* she started putting solo actresses and celebrities on the covers and this made it harder for models to bag good cosmetic contracts and other related assignments. Earlier, models were two-dimensional; they didn’t have much of a voice. The constant focus on appearance tends to strip models of personality. Over time, I think social media has really allowed these young girls like Cara Delevingne to have a personality and a voice. You might or might not like it, but at least they have a first person way of expressing themselves. I think that’s what’s helping to swing it back because models are becoming celebrities in their own world, and I think fashion is more important now. They are the bigger trend-setters today.”

## Your idea of travel

“I think when I’m travelling, I like places that reflect the ethos of the location. For instance, in Japan I would like to stay in a traditional ryokan. In Paris, or in London, I want English hotels with lots of hot water and big beds. In New York, I would want something more hip or urban. So I like it all as long as its good design and well-executed, be it period or modern stuff. In hotels, I like to soak in that vibe.”

SUPERMODEL  
CINDY CRAWFORD

**I think social media has really allowed these young girls like Cara Delevingne to have a personality and a voice, and you might or might not like it, but at least they have a first person way to express themselves.**







THE OMEGA  
CONSTELLATION PLUMA

years ago, I as a model doing an ad campaign. Eventually the relationship evolved and I've done commercials and events for the brand. Most recently I worked on a documentary with a charity called Orbis, that Omega supports. The values that Omega has that I hope to share is quality, timeliness and legacy. They really know how to take care of their clients. We go for these great trips, and they know that for me it isn't just about making an appearance, but to feel that we have the time for a local, cultural experience."

### Your first timepiece

"My very first timepiece was a Swatch Jelly."

### First visit to India

"My first visit to India was for British *Vogue*. It was to Ladakh. I am from a small town in Illinois, so coming to Leh and sleeping in a tent with no running water was an eye-opener. It was so beautiful seeing the Himalayas in the background. I've probably been back there five or six times after."

### Your first luxury buy

"It was an Azzedine Alaïa dress. There was a bodysuit, a skirt, jacket and a belt from a store in Chicago."

## CINDY SPEAK

**Right now on your wrist** Omega Constellation Pluma

**On your skin** Sonia Kashuk

**On your bookshelf** *All the Life We Cannot See*

**On your playlist** That's my husband's department!

**In your wardrobe** Vince jumpsuit

**On your bucket list** Morocco

### Labels on you

"The watch is an Omega Constellation Pluma and it's Peter Palado. Kurt Geiger is what I'm wearing right now. I'm not really a label queen. I don't always care about labels or names. I just like what I like whether it's top shop or designer."

### Five things one would find in your bag

"Oh, let's see. Almonds definitely, for if I get hungry, or even a protein bar. My iPad because I like to watch TV shows like *Game of Thrones*. I usually have a pashmina, or a wrap in there as well. The fifth thing would be a lip conditioner, then my wallet, and phone."

### Similarities between you and Omega

"When I started working with Omega 20

### In what way in the last two decades has the brand impacted your life, and has it turned you into a watch geek?

"I think everyone can appreciate a diamond watch, but what I've learnt from Omega is to appreciate the movement, and the watch-making. That's not something I would've explored before. Omega has a very international vibe and having been with the brand for so long at an international stage has helped keep me relevant in the world."

### Fashion advice

"I think it's if you don't feel comfortable in your clothes, you don't look comfortable. Don't wear something for the sake of fashion because you won't be able to carry it off. And the opposite is true too. If you feel you look good in something, that's what people see."

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INDIA

Where Fashion Gets Personal





## RIGHT FOR YOUR WRIST

The Royal Oak collection by Audemars Piguet has always been a study in sporty elegance, even though the watches have been a bit on the big side. The new Royal Oak selfwinding 37mm appeals to those with slender wrists; people who want to marry the elegant subtlety of the watch with its innate sportiness. It has a pink gold case and its bezel is set with 40 brilliant diamonds. The subtle interplay of satin-brushed and polished surfaces that epitomises all Royal Oak watches finds expression here as well. Similarly, the eight hexagonal screws on the octagonal bezel are in white gold, just as they were on the original 1972 model. The bracelet is seamlessly integrated with the case and features the piece's perfectly assembled links and studs arranged in progressively diminishing size. The silver-toned dial of this Royal Oak bears a "Grande Tapisserie" pattern that now becomes a signature for all Royal Oak selfwinding models. Price on request; Availability: [www.audemarspiguet.com](http://www.audemarspiguet.com)

iPad 00:41



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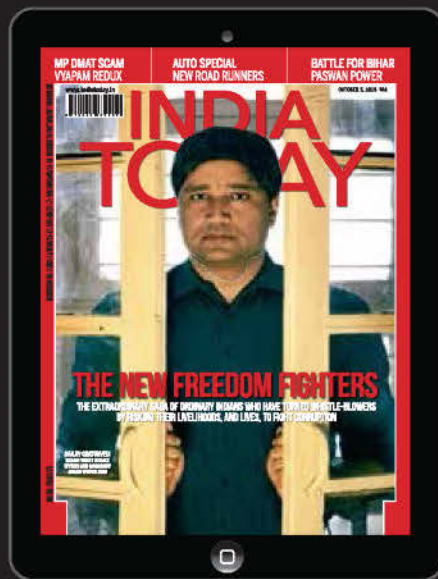




# INDIA TODAY

DIGITAL EDITION

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INDIA  
TODAY

A MONTHLY CITY MAGAZINE

# SIMPLY KOLKATA

PANACHE SPA,  
THE PARK PLAZA



**BLISS LIST**  
RELAX IN THE CITY'S BEST SPAS



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Photograph by SUBIR HALDER

## COVER STORY

**Rest Assured** **s-4**  
Simply Kolkata gives you a low-down on five must-try places that will help you relax and rejuvenate.

## CITY BUZZ

**Into the City** **s-8**  
A checklist on what to do, where to eat and what to shop for.

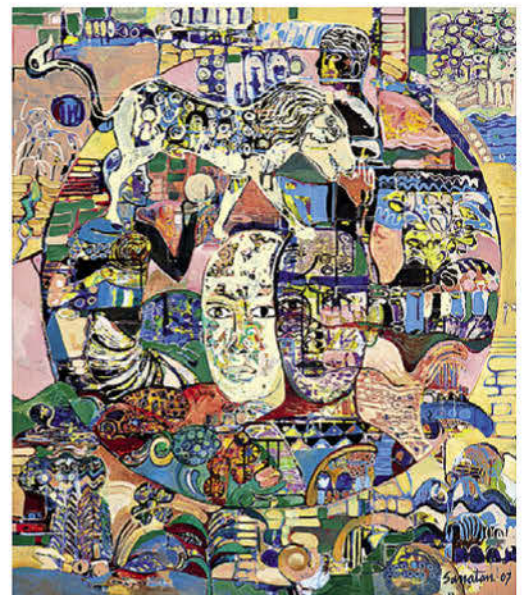
Cover photo by SUBIR HALDER

# OUR PICK of the month

## Riot of Colour

**Till October 3**

Kala Bhavan alumnus Sanatan Saha's pictorial world is replete with exuberant images from his rural past. Each image emerges as a layer on a painted surface as if it floats and doesn't stay limited to the canvas. The images are entirely personal yet universal owing to their aesthetic fulfillment and poignant qualities. **At Gallery Sanskriti, 28B Shakespeare Sarani**  
**Tel 22902274**



**Want to tell us about an event? A new store? A restaurant? People doing interesting things? Anything newsworthy? Please email us at: [simplykolkata@intoday.com](mailto:simplykolkata@intoday.com)**

# Rest ASSURED

By MALINI BANERJEE

## ✿ Marine Makeover Solace Day Spa and Fitness Centre

**A** first of its kind day-spa in Kolkata, Solace has come up with a range of new products and treatments in a bid to reinvent itself. Walk into the colonial era bungalow in the green and posh neighbourhood of Ballygunge, where the spa is housed, and it already feels like a luxury experience. Past the reception, the corridors lead you to the treatment rooms.

### ► NEW LOOK

Two months ago, Solace introduced Blossom Kochchar's range of spa treatments made exclusively for them to their menu. Now, they have also added the famous marine treatments by Thalgo to their repertoire. For dry and dehydrated skin, they have the Source Marine Ritual, also part of the Thalgo range, which uses a peel-off mask, among other things, to restore skin's hydration. The Pure Freshness treatment is ideal for acne-prone and oily skin or combination skin as it helps reduce inflammation, excess oil production while hydrating the skin.

### ► PAMPER POINT

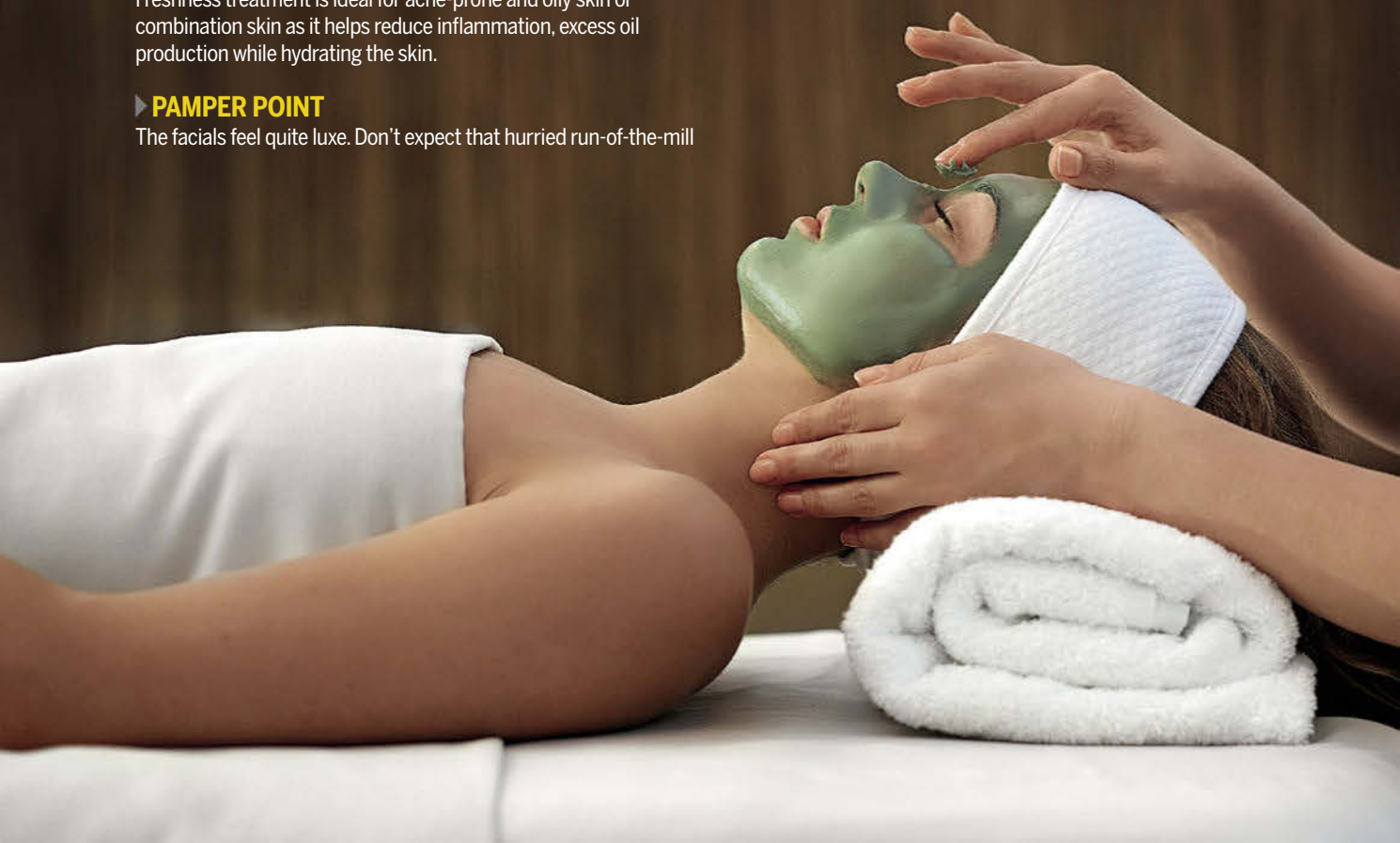
The facials feel quite luxe. Don't expect that hurried run-of-the-mill

parlour facial here. Book your treatment room, change into a robe and treat yourself to a facial or a full body treatment. The four treatment rooms at Solace include a couple's massage room so you can take along your significant other as well. After the massage, you can relax in the Jacuzzi with a cup of green tea or sweat it out in the steam bath for that a post-facial glow.

**Our Pick** Thalgo's signature treatment, the Three Algae Marine Treatment, which is suitable for normal skin types, improves blood circulation, hydrates the skin and is said to help cure skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis.

**Cost** Rs 2,200 onwards for a facial

**At** Solace Day Spa and Wellness Centre, 4 Sunny Park  
**Tel** 30539300





## Wax Eloquent Thai Luxury Spa

**H**ot wax dripping on your skin may sound more like torture than a treat, but the candle wax massage offered at the Thai Luxury Spa comes loaded with all kinds of benefits for your skin.

### ► WRAP UP

The Thai Luxury Spa boasts of an array of exotic treatments and therapies. Charcoal body scrubs and wraps and hot lava stone massage are on the menu for affordable prices.

### ► MORE HYDRATION

The candle wax massage is not quite as scary as it sounds. They don't actually drip hot wax on your body. Instead, the therapists dip their hands in melted wax from

an already lit candle and gently spread the soft wax on your skin. The wax and oil coats the skin and moisturises it. It is gently wiped off with hot towels. And instead of dry candle flakes, you are left with skin that feels smooth and nourished.

**Our Pick** Another of their USPs is the special foot reflexology treatments. Guests are asked to change into loose-fitting culottes so that there isn't anything constricting during a massage. Lie back on cosy leather recliners and let the therapists work on your tired soles.

**Cost** Rs 3,200 plus tax

**At** Thai Luxury Spa, 70, Beck Bagan Row, ground floor

**Tel** 9163777546





## Poolside Retreat In Balance Spa, Novotel

**P**erhaps the hardest thing to do after a long day of work is to drive to your spa. But for those working in central Kolkata, Rajarhat, this is the one con they don't have to live with. Novotel Kolkata, next to Axis Mall, is just a short drive away for Salt Lake and Newtown residents.

### ► WARM WELCOME

Your experience begins from the spa reception itself. An attendant helps you take off your shoes, while another explains the spa menu and the choices, and yet another serves you a welcome drink and offers you cold towels to freshen up. Their menu offers a "rejuvenate indulgence" section which is supposed to help you sleep better. It includes a Swedish massage with organic lavender oil, which will lull you to sleep, followed by a Rejuvenating Ginseng Wrap that uses a blend of ginkgo and ginseng herbs and bamboo beads to exfoliate and refresh your skin. The rhythm of the massage relaxes you and

the herb wrap is used to soothe and relax. Ginseng and ginkgo herbs are known for their antioxidant content and help promote skin renewal. Bathe under their huge rain showers and relax with a cup of green tea afterwards. You can also grab a quick meal at their 24-hour coffee shop, The Square.

**Our Pick** Try their Balinese aromatherapy massage for some pampering. This massage uses acupressure reflexology as well as aromatherapy styles. Not as hard as a deep tissue massage and with more pressure than an aromatherapy massage, this treatment soothes painful joints and sour muscles.

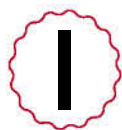
**Cost** Rs 3,150 for an hour

**At** In Balance Spa, Novotel Kolkata, CF 11, Action Area, 1C, New Town, Rajarhat New Town

**Tel** 40323350



## Deep Impact Panache at The Park Plaza



In the heart of residential South Kolkata, The Park Plaza's spa is one of the most accessible five-star spas in the city. Don't let its low-key profile fool you, the spa treatments here are world class. If you walk in without a booking, don't worry, for while you wait, you will be indulged in a foot ritual. As you soak your feet, the spa manager, Praggya Ghosh, will run you through a list of questions and health contraindications.

### ► PRESSURE WISE

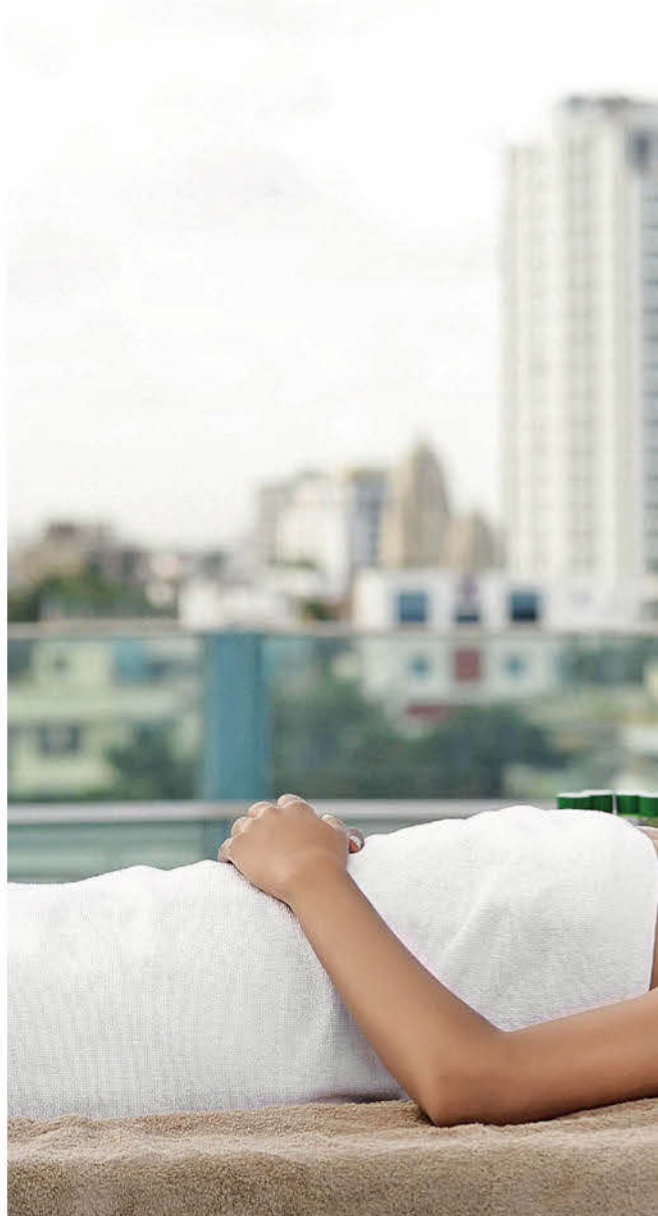
Panache's signature treatments are its Swedish and Aromatherapy massages. All spa products used here are top-of-the-line—either Forest Essentials or Vedic Line. The spa avoids offering a deep tissue massage, unless specifically requested and the client's condition requires it. "It's a treatment I would recommend only to sportspeople or fitness fanatics, who have very sore muscles. The strokes require intense pressure with the help of elbows and knees and it's not for everyone," says Ghosh.

**Our Pick** If you're a sleep-deprived traveller, Panache is working on an 'insomniac's special', in which they will use a soothing formulation of oils to relax you and provide you with a special pillow in your room that will help you sleep.

**Cost** Rs 2,500 plus taxes

**At** Panache Salon and Spa, The Park Plaza, 17, Garcha, 1st Lane, Ballygunge

**Tel** 40409999



SHUTTERSTOCK





Photograph by SUBIR HALDER

## Salt of the Earth Soulistic

**B**ack in the days when vacations were prescribed to the convalescent, breathing in fresh seaside air was considered beneficial for one's overall wellbeing. The salt room at Soulistic offers a similar concept to its patrons.

► **HEAL AS YOU BREATHE** Soulistic, an alternative healing centre, offers myriad services from sound healing to halotherapy (salt therapy). Next to the reception is their small salt room, which is coated with a thick layer of salt from floor to ceiling. Even the lights are quoted in salt. Salt-laden air is pumped into the room which guests are supposed to inhale, while lounging on their reclining chairs. Other services include sound healing for stressed out minds and guided meditation to heal a person and restore him or her to meditative calmness.

**Our Pick** Salt therapy is beneficial for the respiratory system as it is known to treat medical conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, sinusitis, snoring and in some cases, eczema too.

**Cost** Rs 500 for half an hour

**At** 1, second floor, Allenby Road **Tel** 09836456789



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RESTAURANT REVIEW / NOSH AND BYTES

# QUICK BITES

**T**he pretty blue and white interiors and faux French windows instantly draw your attention to Nosh and Bytes. A glass facade gives it the feeling of being a street-side cafe while its Eiffel Tower print wallpaper speaks of its European touch. And even though we had room for just coffee and a snack, we were tempted to settle down for a meal.

We started with a watermelon and feta salad, which was delightfully refreshing. The balance of flavours was perfect—salty, cheese and tangy—with balsamic vinegar and sweet watermelon. While the Pollo Alfredo was as creamy and cheesy as it's supposed to be with the penne pasta just perfectly al dente, the desserts were quite disappointing. The panna cotta was thick and dense and the tiramisu, dry and over-sweet. Definitely not something we would recommend.

We ordered two drinks to go with our food. The watermelon juice was freshly squeezed and not the canned variety. The mango and apricot ice blast, was almost like a sorbet in a margarita glass with fresh authentic flavours and none of that cloying sweetness found in artificial syrups. The service left no room for complaints—they did apologise profusely for not being able to serve a couple of dishes listed in the menu, but not available when ordered.

**Meal for two Rs 800 for two**  
**At Nosh and Bytes, 10 Wood Street**  
**Tel 30859063**

■ **By Malini Banerjee**



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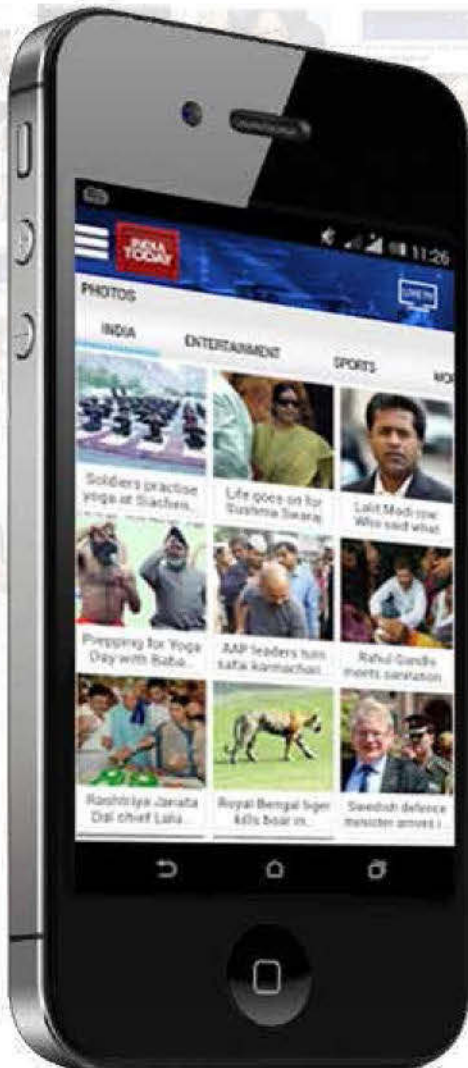
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# 3 MUST HAVES PUJA SPECIAL

## Bong Connection

» **1** La Terrasse is doing a special Bengali-themed lunch and dinner buffet. On the menu will be Bengali delicacies and desserts like Bhapa Sandesh, Misthi Doi, Channar Jilipi, to name a few. The meal also includes a surprise Bengali-style welcome drink and a soft drink.

**Cost** Rs 2,750 per person all inclusive **When** October 20 to 23  
**At** La Terrasse, The Oberoi Grand, 15 Jawahar Lal Nehru Road  
**Tel** 30859018



Photograph by SHEKHAR GHOSH



## Right Foot Forward

» **3** Hamlyn Grande, a 3,000 sq ft store, is truly a shoe-lover's paradise.

Done up in opulent gold and black with trunks and retro-style telephones, the store itself is an experience. It offers a wide variety of shoes, perfect to pick up a few items before the puja season begins. From hand-painted pumps to bright peep-toes, from ballerina flats to blingy footwear for the brides-to-be and their entourage—there's something for everyone here. The men's collection includes colourful moccasins and smart formal shoes. The store also houses bags and purses for men and women, as well as jewellery by designer Rohita Bhskaran.

**Cost** Rs 1,299 onwards  
**At** Metro Plaza Shopping Centre, Store 2017-23, 1 Ho Chi Minh **Tel** 40015751

## Festive Fervour

» **2** This puja season, take a break from the usual Bengali bhogs and dig into rich Awadhi cuisine. Oudh 1590 is hosting an Awadhi festival on all four days of the pujas. On the menu are melt-in-the-mouth Galawati kebabs, Zafrani kebabs, Awadhi Handi Biryani and Gosht Biryani and much more. The vegetarian spread includes Lehsuni Palak, Corn Seek Kebab and Paneer Qorma. **Meal for two** Rs 2,750 per person all inclusive **At** 23/B Deshapriya Park, CD-86, Sector 1, Salt Lake City **Tel** 65656551



A MONTHLY CITY MAGAZINE

INDIA  
TODAY

# SIMPLY HYDERABAD



## BLISS LIST

RELAX IN THE CITY'S  
BEST SPAS

O2 SPA,  
NOVOTEL HOTEL



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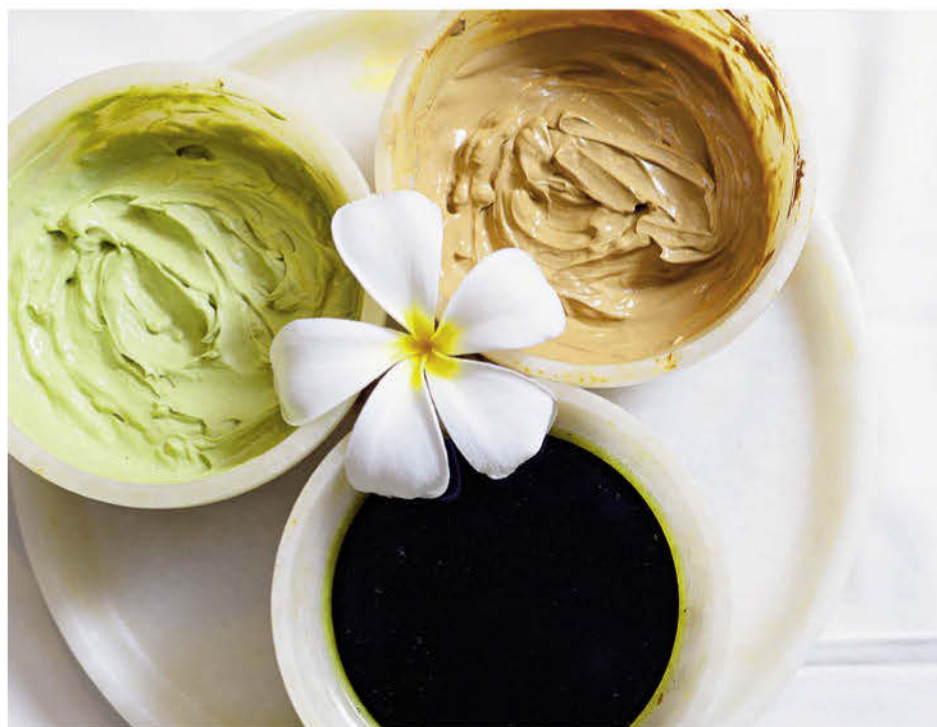
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Photograph by KRISHNENDU HALDER

#### COVER STORY

**Retreat, Relax, Recharge s-4**  
Indulge in our pick of luxurious therapies for your mind and body.

#### CITY BUZZ

**Into the City s-11**  
Five things to look forward to in the city.

Cover photo by KRISHNENDU HALDER

## OUR PICK of the month

### High Life

**October 3 to 4**

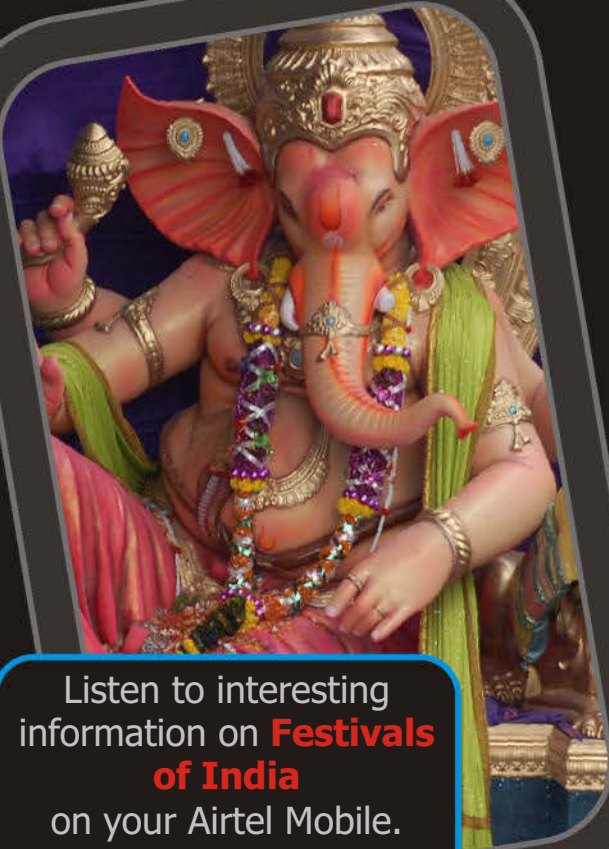
If it's diamonds, expensive art, designer dresses and fancy cars under one roof, it is the Indian Luxury Expo. Everything high end and all things luxurious is what the annual expo is all about. Time to bring out the pamper and indulgence funds then, "but it takes a very high level of self esteem besides the money to buy indulgence of this sort," said an expo shopper last year.

At N Convention, Lane opp Shilparamam, Madhapur  
Contact [theindianluxuryexpo.com](http://theindianluxuryexpo.com)



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# RETREAT RELAX RECHARGE

INDULGE IN OUR PICK OF LUXURIOUS  
THERAPIES FOR YOUR MIND AND BODY

By **MONA RAMAVAT**



## BEAUTY SLEEP

O2, NOVOTEL HYDERABAD

**FOR THE FREQUENT TRAVELLER, O2 SPA HAS** come up with a special therapy for beating jetlag. **SOAK IN** Find yourself happily lost in this rainforest-inspired spa. With foliage all around, it feels like dusk over here at any time of the day.

**OUR PICK** "Aromatherapy works wonders for the body rhythms that are disturbed after a long journey and moving across time zones," says Srinath Nalluri, head of marketing at O2 Spa. A quick foot ritual follows a full body massage using essential oils like lavender, Roman chamomile, and sweet marjoram to help calm and relax the system. Other invigorating oils include rosemary, lemon and eucalyptus that are meant for energising the system.

**HOW IT HELPS** "A combination of two kinds of oils is used to set right the sleep cycle of the body," says Nalluri. It enables one to relax, sleep better and also helps with other issues such as indigestion or irritability. The deep sense of well-being that follows is an added benefit.

**INSIDER TIP** Peppermint and black pepper essential oils are excellent for relieving a sore back after long hours in an aircraft. They help ease away the pain gently, leaving you feeling more energised. **DURATION** 60 minutes **COST** Rs 2,965 **AT** Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre, Hitec City **TEL** 66824422



Jetlag Therapy  
at O2 Spa





## COMFORT COCOON

HEAVENLY SPA,  
WESTIN

**P**ampering your skin with the best of natural products at Heavenly Spa is a treat for the senses.

**SOAK IN** The spacious and softly lit therapy rooms at Heavenly Spa make for a calm setting for treatments. Graphic floral designs on the walls add to the feel-good and artsy ambience.

**OUR PICK** The Ocean Mud Wrap, a blend of herbs, fresh flowers, fruit juices and absorbent clays, makes for the perfect combination to nourish your skin. An exfoliating scrub helps rid the skin of dead cells, after which, the herb wrap is applied all over the body. A few minutes later, the therapist covers the body with a thermal blanket for better absorption of mud into the skin. "For dry or acne-prone skin, we add a bit of rosewater or orange juice to the mud mix. Likewise, cucumber juice works well for sensitive skin," says Mahesh Lal, the spa manager.

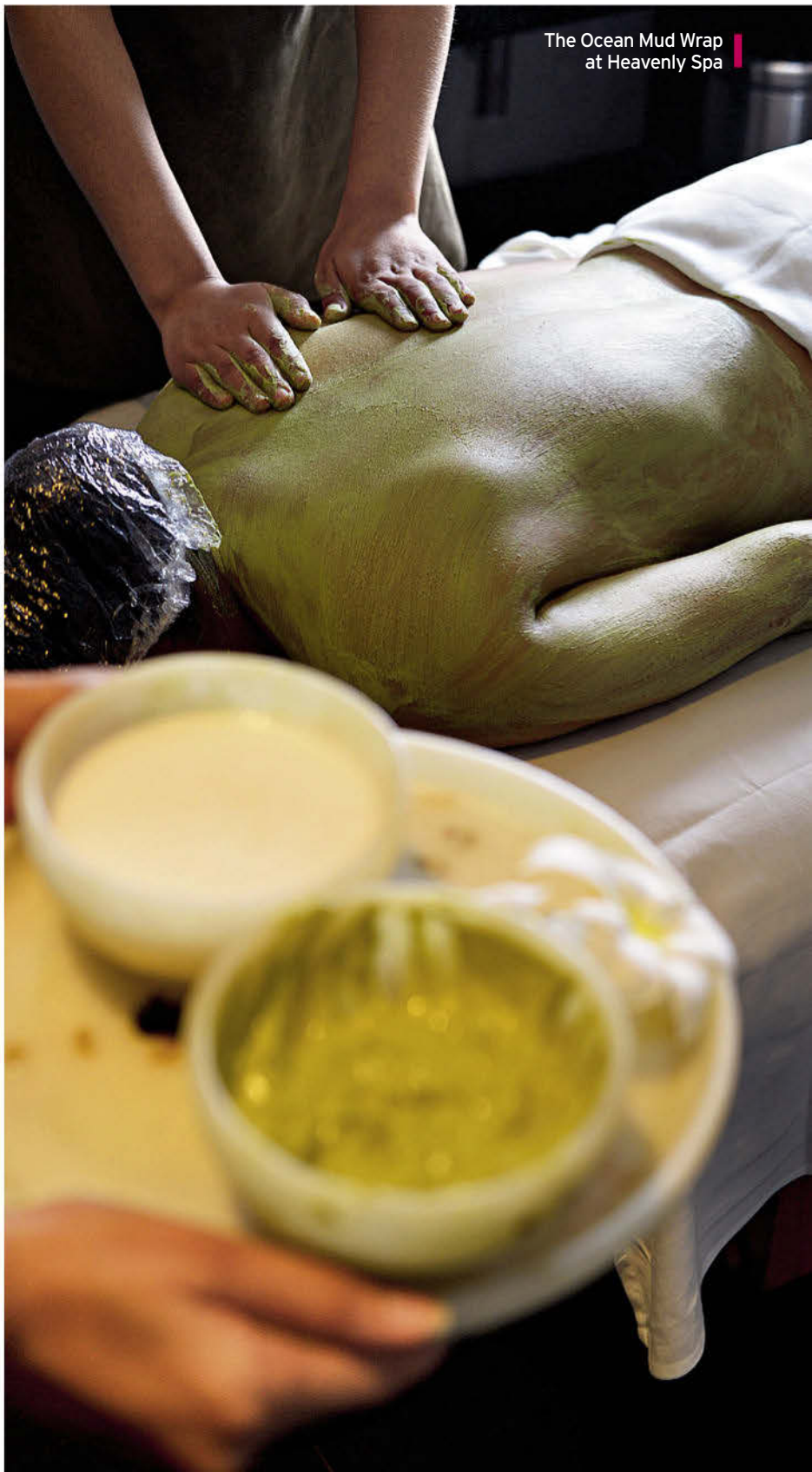
**HOW IT HELPS** The deeply rejuvenating Ocean Mud Wrap, inspired from the ancient practices of mud healing is ideal for detoxification and renewal of skin cells. "Since ocean mud is rich in minerals, it cleanses and nourishes the skin, while drawing out toxins," says Lal.

**INSIDER TIP** Drink plenty of water before and after the treatment to help hydrate your skin.

**COST** Rs 2,700 plus taxes

**DURATION** 40 minutes

**AT** The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace **TEL** 67676767



The Ocean Mud Wrap  
at Heavenly Spa



## OPULENT FINISH

THE SPA, PARK HYATT

**P**earls certainly add a dash of sheen to your style but did you know that they make for extremely nourishing skin food too? Experience this unique treatment at The Spa at Park Hyatt.

**SOAK IN** The interiors of this spa are inspired by the palaces of the Nizams. The royal feel of the place spells indulgence.

**OUR PICK** The signature body scrub, which contains a rich mix of finely milled dust of seawater pearls and almond powder is a unique therapy. A ten-minute steam bath at the beginning of the treatment kicks in the detoxification process, after which the scrub is applied all over the body, "including the feet," says Smita D'Silva, the spa manager. The nutrients are easily absorbed by the skin, helping the removal of dead cells. After the scrub is washed off, the therapist uses a moisturiser to re-hydrate the freshly exfoliated skin.

**HOW IT HELPS** "It clears toxins from the skin. Since pearls contain nine kinds of protein, amino acids and other trace elements, they are great building blocks for the skin," says D'Silva. Moreover, pearls are naturally compatible and non-toxic, making fatigued and dull skin look livelier.

**INSIDER TIP** Avoid direct exposure to sunlight, dust and pollution after this treatment.

**DURATION** 45 minutes

**COST** Rs 2,500 plus taxes

**AT** Park Hyatt, Road No 2, Banjara Hills

**TEL** 49491234

The Pearl Radiance Body Scrub Park Hyatt





## AQUA BLISS

LEO JUVENTA,  
LEONIA RESORTS

**A** hot water treatment might be a great idea after a tiring day at work. And a Turkish hammam

at Leo Juventa will leave you feeling refreshed and energetic.

**SOAK IN** Walk into this spa and it's a world of luxury. The classy décor with happy pastel colours is rejuvenating. The water bodies nestled between verdant spaces lend a soothing feel to the place.

**OUR PICK** The Turkish hammam experience here involves moving between pools heated at varying temperatures, followed by a cold water shower. A foot massage, using underwater jets in the pool, helps you de-stress.

**HOW IT HELPS** "The sequence of exposing the body to rising temperatures of water and cooling it down soon after, can improve blood circulation besides inducing deep relaxation and cleansing of the skin," says Dr Sofia Mudda, the naturopathy in-charge at Leo Juventa.

**INSIDER TIP** The spa cafe menu has interesting healthy options like the fruit and cheese platter grilled chicken panini.

**COST** Rs 1,000 plus taxes

**DURATION** 30 minutes

**AT** Leo Juventa, Leonia Resorts, Shameerpet

**TEL** 66400000



The spa pool at  
Leo Juventa



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Bonding over a foot  
massage at Meghavi



## LET OFF STEAM

MEGHA VI SPA

**L**azy Sunday brunches are now passé as spa parties are the next in thing to bond over in a relaxed atmosphere.

**SOAK IN** The spa which is housed in a three-storey contemporary style bungalow is essentially white with interesting wall art that you can admire as you wait at the lounge. The four treatment rooms have individual colour themes with hand-painted artworks on the walls.

**HOW IT HELPS** Spend a serene afternoon with friends over a massage or pedicure here.

“Or even a quick session of Reiki, which can instantly add a positive boost to your day and the relaxed atmosphere helps people interact more freely in a big group,” says owner Megha Dinesh who has trained the therapists in Reiki healing.

**HOW IT HELPS?** The relaxed mood is perfect for a Reiki healing session, with the therapists working with their palms on the shoulders or back. “Even a few minutes of Reiki healing is excellent for lifting mood,” says Dinesh.

**INSIDER TIP** A bachelorette party can begin as a spa party with massages and even makeup sessions thrown in for the guests, leading to a fun evening later.

**DURATION** Varies

**COST** Rs 2,000 onwards including snacks

**AT** Meghavi, Road No 12, Banjara Hills **TEL** 23335678



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1

# 5 THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO

## 1 Picture Perfect

→ OCTOBER 1 TO 10

From shows featuring stylised fashion portraits to hard-hitting photojournalism, artist talks, photography tours, book launches and much more will make up the debut edition of the Indian Photography Festival. Organised by Light Craft Foundation and Government of Telangana, the festival promises to be a delightful visual extravaganza for photography enthusiasts. Renowned photographers Ben Lowy, Russell Hart and John Issac will also share their insights on the art of making pictures in the three-day-long master class.

At State Gallery of Fine Arts, Kavuri Hills Tel 9963371314



## 2 Oriental Platter

→ ALL THROUGH OCTOBER

The recently introduced pan-Asian brunch Som Tam, on Sundays at the Thai Pavilion is a delight for Oriental food lovers. From half a dozen varieties of sushi to twice as many appetisers set the prelude to a sumptuous main course that consists of delights like Beijing hot and sour potato string to go with spicy stir fried noodles or jasmine rice. The dessert platter is interesting too with exotic items like water chestnut ruby in coconut cream. **Cost** Rs 1,399 all inclusive, per person

**At** Thai Pavilion, Vivanta by Taj, Begumpet **Tel** 67252626





Photograph by KRISHNENDU HALDER

#### 4 Royal Flavours

**R**ajwada is a well-kept secret on the third-floor of an ordinary-looking building. The earthy tunes of Rajasthani folk music set the mood of the restaurant adorned with wall pictures of palace life and classic furniture from Rajasthan. While the ambience is all about Rajasthan, the menu includes North Indian cuisine, besides Chinese and Italian fare too. So pair your Lung Fung soup with hariyali paneer tikka or dahi ke kebab. Something like an Jalepeno lamb sizzler can be a mini meal in itself.

**Cost for two Rs 1,800 plus taxes**

**At At Road No 12, Old MLA Colony, Banjara Hills  
Tel 33165340**

■ **By Mona Ramavat**

Photograph by KRISHNENDU HALDER



#### 3 Poetic Rendition

→ **ALL THROUGH OCTOBER**

A picture certainly speaks a thousand words and artist Paresh Maity artworks resound with the sublime beauty of words from 15 of Rabindranath Tagore's poems written in his final few months. The exhibition, titled Shesh Lekha, features water colours, drawings and calligraphy. Talking of his inspiration, Maity says, "Tagore's work and art is imbibed into the blood of anyone born in Bengal," and certainly revered all across India. **At Hyatt Hyderabad, Gachobowli Tel 48481234**

Photograph by KRISHNENDU HALDER



#### 5 Mane Attraction

**L**et your hair down, even as the New York-trained stylists at the recently-launched Warren Tricomi salon bring out the diva in you. Everything about this salon speaks chic—from the airy no-fuss interiors to the waiting area featuring artsy portraits and of course the creative hair styling. You can even get a pampering pedicure done while you get your hair styled. **Cost Rs 200 At Apollo Life Centre, Jubilee Hills Tel 23559060**